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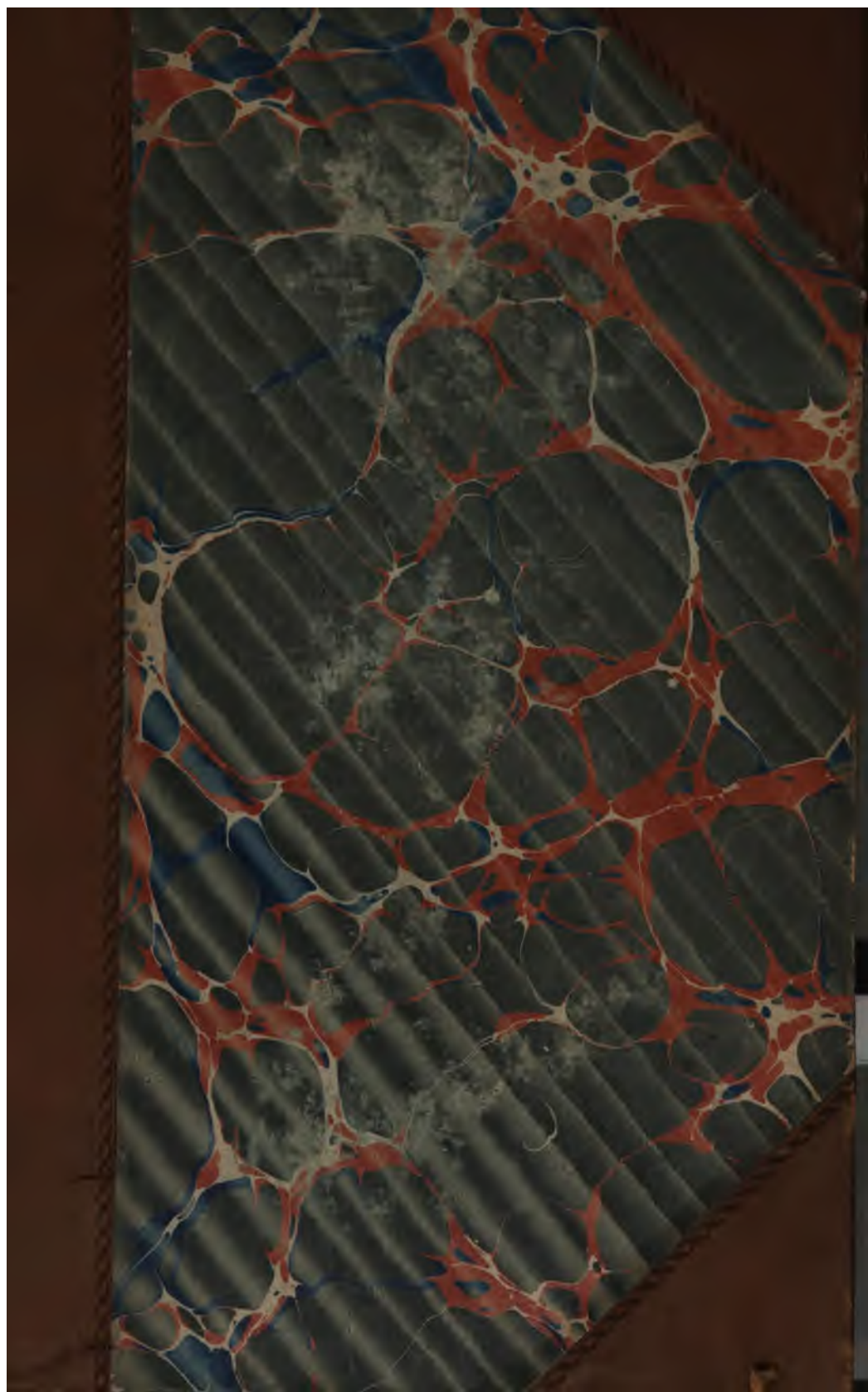
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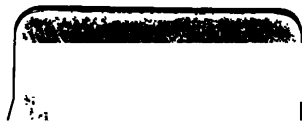
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THE
HISTORY OF ENGLAND,

FROM THE

ACCESSION OF GEORGE III.,

1760,

TO

THE ACCESSION OF QUEEN VICTORIA,

1837.

BY THE REV. T. S. HUGHES, B.D.,

CANON OF PETERBOROUGH.

BEING THE COMPLETION OF THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND FROM THE INVASION
OF JULIUS CÆSAR, TO THE PRESENT REIGN.

THIRD EDITION,

WITH THE AUTHOR'S CORRECTIONS, IMPROVEMENTS, AND ENLARGEMENT.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A PRELIMINARY ESSAY.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
GEORGE BELL, 186, FLEET STREET.

1846.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY RAYNER AND HODGES,
109, Fetter Lane, Fleet Street.

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Lord
North's
proposi-
tions for
the relief
of Ireland.

extorted what had been denied to entreaties; till England had lost the moment of granting with dignity, and Ireland of receiving with gratitude.

In accordance with his promise, on the thirteenth of December, lord North introduced three propositions for the relief of Ireland; allowing a free export of wool, woollens, and wool-flocks; of glass, with all kinds of glass manufactures; and a free trade with the British plantations on certain conditions, the basis of which was an equality of taxes and customs. The first two bills passed without delay; and the third, as soon as the sentiments of the Irish on it could be ascertained: about two months afterwards, his lordship perfected his plan, by repealing the prohibitions on exportation of English gold coin, and importation of foreign hops; also by enabling the Irish to become members of the Turkey company, and to engage in the Levant trade.

These regulations appeared to satisfy the Irish nation; but the appearance was delusive: in the midst of concessions which were confessed to be as liberal as the jealousy of British traders would permit, the craft of statesmanship was still visible, and a political manœuvre was practised of altering bills in a period of excitement, which eventually turned against the projectors. 'The bills altered on this occasion,' says a philosophic historian,¹ 'were not, as in the former case, money-bills: that folly, the minister did not venture to repeat: but one of them was a bill involving the dearest interests of the people; and the alteration was such, as gave to the public mind the only impulse which it then required for aspiring to constitutional independence. The Irish parliament, not choosing that its military establishment should be longer regulated by a British mutiny-law, transmitted a bill of similar import: the minister, as if eager to indemnify himself for commercial concessions by constitutional spoliation, introduced an alteration by which the law was to be rendered perpetual; and the Irish parliament, though it passed the bill thus altered,

¹ Dr. Miller; *Modern History*, vol. iv. p. 471.

was taught to look to freedom of constitution as the necessary safeguard to freedom of trade; to assert its own independence, while it unfettered the commerce of the country: when the minister had first, by his altered money-bills, alarmed the constitutional jealousy of the guardians of the public purse, he then, by another alteration, rendering the mutiny-law perpetual, manifested a desire of securing to government uncontrolled direction of the military power. Language could not more forcibly exhort the people to be satisfied with no concessions merely commercial; but to demand that their country should be acknowledged as an independent, though not a separated state.'

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While the premier was endeavoring to tranquillise Ireland, a spirit of disaffection arose in England, from a cause which never fails to interest the feelings of a nation in distress; the expenses of government, and the necessity of economy. Few subjects are more difficult to handle than this; for while one party declaims, with apparent justice, against the expensive trappings of royalty, and the profusion of ministerial patronage, as unduly extending court influence, and endangering popular rights; others speciously argue, that a systematic frugality is inconsistent with the nature of our government, which cannot be carried on without parliamentary interest; and that such interest cannot be secured without the expensive appendages of pensions, sinecures, and lucrative employments. Two methods only, it is said, have as yet been discovered to rule mankind; force and bribery: if we choose to live under a free government, where public employments are open to the honorable ambition of all, and where every man's house is his castle, into which the foot of tyranny cannot enter, we must be content to pay for such privileges—must bear with minor evils for the sake of higher advantages.

Cause of
economical
reform.

Without attempting to controvert these principles, or denying that to possess a guarantee for good government, the services of the best men must be secured by liberal remuneration, we ought not to shut our eyes against the necessity of checking that lavish expen-

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diture, which, by encouraging the bad, corrupting the indifferent, and disgusting the virtuous, tends to bring on a paralysis of the body politic: for while the reasons for supporting a system, notwithstanding its expenses, are generally abstruse and philosophical, the abuses of that system are evident and glaring; so that the evils are easily seen by many, while the advantages are comprehended only by few; and the dangers arising thence are more than doubled by a free press. The efforts therefore made by Mr. Burke, in the cause of economical reform, and to bring back the constitution to its first principles, were highly meritorious: the corruptions of that aristocratic power which had so long predominated in the British government, had begun to bring obloquy on the monarchy itself; and Mr. Burke wisely endeavored to combine with the maintenance of ancient institutions and established rights, the correction of real abuses, the pure administration of public patronage, and a prudent management of the public expenditure. He had long labored in his country's service; and for the intire surrender of his uncommon talents to the interests of the nation, he had as yet received but few tokens of public approbation: this, however, abated not his zeal; while the present season seemed most propitious to his exertions, since parliament had now entered on its sixth session; and the members of the lower house began to recollect that they must soon render an account of their political conduct to their excited constituents.

The first attack, however, on the profuse system of administration was made in the upper house by the duke of Richmond, who moved an address to his majesty for the reduction of all useless expenditure; in support of which he recounted our large war establishment, the immense expense with which it was attended, and the frightful increase of our national debt. He contrasted the state of this country with the wise system of economy adopted by France under Neckar; and though he did not wish to make any deduction from the stipends settled on those who had wasted fortunes in their country's service, or to

abridge the dignity and splendor of the crown; yet he thought the king should set an example of retrenchment, which he had no doubt the nobility would cheerfully follow.

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It was objected to this motion, that the facts recited were unauthenticated: a considerable reduction conveyed no specific meaning; a minister could not advise the king under such a vote, nor was his majesty bound to pay any regard to it; the civil list was established by act of parliament, and could not be retrenched by the decision of one house. Chiefly it was considered as an attempt to serve the temporary interests of a political party, by effecting the removal of ministers; and it was accordingly rejected by a majority of seventy-seven to thirty-seven.

The subject was introduced into the lower house on the fifteenth of December, by Mr. Burke, who gave notice of his intention to propose certain important resolutions after the recess: he also extolled the financial system of M. Neckar, to which he attributed the reproduction of the French marine out of the wrecks and fragments of the last war. He anticipated a cool reception of his propositions, since their tendency would be to weaken court influence: men, however, out of office could only make an offer; the people must achieve the rest; if they were not true to themselves, no other power could save them. All our national grievances arose from the overgrown influence of the crown, and that influence itself from the enormous prodigality of the commons. Formerly its operation was confined to the superior orders of the state, but of late it had insinuated itself into every crack and cranny of the community: there was scarcely a family so hidden and lost in the obscure recesses of society as not to feel that it had something to keep or to get, to hope or to fear, from the favor or displeasure of the crown. Government should have force adequate to its functions, but no more: if it had enough to support itself in abusing or neglecting them, they must ever be abused or neglected: men would rely on power for a justification of their want of order, vigilance,

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foresight, and all other virtues or qualifications of statesmen. The minister might exist, but the government was gone.

‘It is thus,’ he exclaimed, ‘that you see the same men, in the same power, sitting undisturbed before you, although thirteen colonies are lost: thus the marine of France and Spain has grown and prospered under their eye, and been fostered by their neglect: thus all hope of alliance in Europe is abandoned: thus three of our West India islands have been torn from us in one summer; while Jamaica, the most important of all, has been neglected, and every inquiry into that neglect stifled: thus Ireland has been brought into a state of distraction which no one dares to discuss: our parliamentary capacity is extinguished by the difficulty of our situation; for the bill has been mumbled over with rapidity, and it passes in the silence of death. Had the administration possessed any degree of strength, could this have happened?’ The disease of government, he observed, was a repletion; the over-feeding of the stomach had destroyed the vigor of the limbs: he had long ascertained the nature of the disorder, and its proper remedy; but had restrained his thoughts, for he was not naturally an economist; and was cautious of experiment, even to timidity: but the present temper of the times was favorable to reformation; and though he would not now disclose all the particulars of his plan, he would state its end, object, and limits.

He proposed, then, a regulation which would give to the public service £200,000 a year, and annihilate a portion of influence equal to the places of fifty members of parliament: such a reform was more to be relied on, for removing the means of corruption, than any devices to prevent its operation: an abrogation of the sources of influence would render disqualifications unnecessary; but while the sources remained, nothing could prevent their operation. With regard to the limits of his plan, nothing would be invaded which was held by any individual under a legal tenure: equity and mercy also would be remembered in those

cases where innocent persons had been decoyed, as it were, into particular situations through the prodigality of parliament: the alterations would chiefly affect those who held offices from which they might be removed by ministerial arrangements: no employment really useful to the public would be abolished or abridged of its emoluments; a fund fully adequate to the reward of merit would be left; and an ample provision secured to the crown for personal satisfaction, and for as much of magnificence as was suitable to the burdened state of the country. However presumptuous his attempt might appear, it was made with humility and integrity: he trusted it would give confidence to the people, and strength to the government; that it would render war vigorous, and peace truly refreshing.

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Mr. Burke's plan received much commendation from several members on his own side of the house, but was passed over in silence by the ministerial speakers. During the Christmas recess, a large meeting of freeholders in Yorkshire was held, and a strong petition voted to the house of commons, for an inquiry into abuses of the public expenditure, and for the reduction of all exorbitant emoluments: a permanent committee also was appointed for carrying on the correspondence necessary to promote the object of this petition, to support a laudable reform, and to restore the freedom of parliament. This example was followed by many other counties and cities, where public meetings were convened, in which violent harangues were delivered against the administration; although in some instances protests were signed, and counter-petitions framed.

On the eleventh of February, 1780, Mr. Burke introduced his memorable plan into the house of commons, with an eloquent speech, free from passion, purified from party views, and tender toward personal interests; for, though zealous to promote reform, he was yet cautious against the intemperate pursuit of it. The whole scheme was included in five bills, comprising the sale of forest lands; the abolition of the royal

Mr.
Burke's
plan of
economical
reform.

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jurisdictions of Wales, Chester, Cornwall, and Lancaster; that of treasurer, comptroller, and many other officers in the household; of treasurer of the chamber, of the wardrobe, &c.; of the boards of trade, green cloth, and works; of the office of third secretary of state; of the keepers of the royal hounds; of many civil branches of the ordnance and the mint, with the patent offices of the exchequer; the regulation of the army, navy, and pension pay-offices; and more especially a new arrangement of the civil list, by which all future encumbrances of debt might be avoided, without any undue encroachment on the royal prerogative. The plan of reforming so many offices, of reducing or regulating so many sources of influence, and of applying appropriate remedies to grievances, could only have been contrived by a person of eminent talents and unwearied zeal;² but the very extent of the bill, involving as it did such numerous interests and enemies, was almost certain to ensure its failure: besides, the utility of economy in the various cases now selected, was not so evident as it would have appeared, if applied to more important departments of public expenditure: but the chief cause of failure was that state of political ignorance, in which the great mass of the community was at this period immersed: without due pressure from without, how can it be expected that a corrupt assembly will reform itself from within? all parties indeed joined in applauding that depth of financial knowledge, and that acute discrimination which were displayed by the mover; but the ministerialists were ingenious enough to oppose in detail what they commended in the gross. The bills were fiercely argued during the months of March, April, and May; eliciting from their proposer many speeches distinguished by great force of argument, fertility of invention, and liveliness of wit; but in the end all met the fate which might have been anticipated: nevertheless, the object of opposition was obtained by the

² 'Mr. Burke's reform bill,' says Gibbon, 'was framed with skill, introduced with eloquence, and supported by numbers. Never can I forget the delight with which that diffusive and ingenious orator was heard by all sides of the house; and even by those whose existence he proscribed.'

celebrity of the attempt; for the popularity of the measure was important to their cause: its triumph probably would have excited their regret.

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While Mr. Burke's project was yet in suspense, several auxiliary propositions were made in both houses; among the more prominent of which was one for a commission of accounts, to investigate the expenditure of the public revenue: this subject was introduced to the house of lords by the earl of Shelburne; who in a long and able speech exposed the scandalous profusion visible in all branches of government, declaring that his main object was to destroy that undue influence which affected both houses of parliament; and which, if not eradicated, would bring ruin on the country. His motion was supported by the duke of Grafton, and the marquis of Rockingham; the latter of whom declared, that a system had been established, at the accession of his present majesty, for governing this kingdom under the forms of law, but really by the direct influence of the crown; and to this he ascribed all our national misfortunes. The measure having been strongly opposed by lords Stormont, Mansfield, and Thurlow, as violating the exclusive privileges of the other house, and intended only to embarrass government, was lost by the votes of 101 against 55; but the minority, thirty-five of whom entered a protest on the journals, was the largest which for a long time had appeared in opposition to court interests.

In the house of commons, when colonel Barré suggested the necessity of some addition to Mr. Burke's propositions, and intimated his intention of moving, at a future day, for a commission of accounts, he was surprised to find lord North heartily coinciding with him, and sanctioning the measure: his lordship accordingly moved for the appointment of such a committee, which might inquire, not only into past expenditure, but current accounts: it was indeed strongly opposed during its whole progress, and decried, as tending to create new sources of patronage, while the people were petitioning for reduction: but it passed; and six independent gentlemen of great respectability and talent

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were appointed commissioners, whose reports, drawn up with much industry and ability, conveyed to the public very valuable stores of political information. The bill for excluding contractors from sitting in parliament, and suspending the votes of revenue officers, passed the commons, but was rejected by the lords, as an illiberal stigma cast on a respectable body of men, and as a mean compliance with popular prejudices.

During these debates, petitions were daily received, enforcing the necessity of economy, and of diminishing the influence of the crown: in the midst of the debates, on a motion made by sir George Savile, for an account of all places with salaries, and all pensions payable at the exchequer, or out of the privy purse, a short suspension of business was occasioned by an indisposition of the speaker. When the sittings were resumed, lord North carried an amendment, that the pensions payable at the exchequer only should be published; at the same time, a motion was introduced into the upper house, by the earl of Effingham, for a list of all pensions enjoyed by peers of parliament: in the debates which ensued, the state of the Scottish peerage was severely handled; but the proposition was lost by a large majority.

Political
alterca-
tions.

During the whole of this session personal invective was carried to a high pitch; which caused a hostile meeting not only between Mr. Adam and Mr. Fox, but also between Mr. Fullarton and the earl of Shelburne, the latter of whom had reflected in very contemptuous terms on the appointment of the other to command a regiment which he had lately raised: these transactions induced sir James Lowther to declare in the commons, that if questions of a public nature were to be tried by appeals to the sword, the British parliament would soon resemble a Polish diet. An altercation of a different kind occurred between lord North and the speaker; the latter of whom felt dissatisfied at the disappointment of a supposed claim, depending on a promise made to him by the duke of Grafton, of being appointed chief justice in the court

of common pleas; for negotiations were now in progress for promoting the attorney general to that station. The minister very justly denied that he was responsible for the promises of his predecessors; and Mr. Wedderburne, with great force and severity, exposed the arrogance of sir Fletcher Norton's pretensions: but from this time the speaker joined the ranks of opposition, and repeated their cries of crown influence, abuse of prerogative, and rights of the people; starting up as a patriot, when his unjustifiable demands were disallowed.

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During these disputes, petitions were daily laid before the house: that from the county of York was presented on the eighth of February by sir George Savile, who stated that it had received the signatures of above 8000 freeholders, after being moved in a meeting, not of incendiaries, but of 600 gentlemen, possessing more property than those who were assembled within the walls of the house of commons. 'To this,' said he, 'the administration will not dare to refuse a hearing, however the arts of ministerial finesse may be employed to defeat its purpose.' Mr. Fox used similar language in presenting the Westminster petition; and sir James Lowther, in offering that from Cumberland, forgot himself so far as to say, 'that if the house should turn a deaf ear to so respectable a body, they would do themselves justice by withholding the taxes.'

The discussion of these petitions, fixed for the sixth of April, was anticipated with eager expectation; and a numerous meeting of the inhabitants of Westminster was convened by direction of the corresponding committee: this, however, being represented as an attempt to overawe the proceedings of parliament, government stationed a large body of troops in the vicinity. A call of the commons had been ordered, and petitions continued to be received before the commencement of the debate, until the speaker's table was almost buried beneath folds of parchment: the house having then resolved itself into a committee, Mr. Dunning took the lead in the memorable debates of this day; exhibiting,

Debates
on the in-
crease of
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in a continued series, the history and philosophy of constitutional law, and animadverting on measures which endangered British rights and liberties in former times: afterwards, he drew a highly-colored picture of ministerial conduct at present, showing its tendency to produce mischief similar to that which had been produced by the counsels of the house of Stuart; and he concluded by stating, that he should frame two propositions, abstracted from the petitions on the table, and take the sense of the committee on them: the first was, 'that the influence of the crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished;' a fact, he observed, which was notorious; nor could there be a stronger proof of alarming and corrupt influence, than the readiness shown by many members in that house to support measures, which out of doors they reprobated as absurd and ruinous. He could point out more than fifty who had adopted such strange language and conduct.

Ministers defended themselves by calling the resolution an abstract proposition, which ought not to be entertained by the house: in other respects it was useless, being calculated to avert no evil, and to remedy no abuse: it was unsupported by facts; nor did the allegations of the mover rest on any foundation.

The speaker now added his influence to that of opposition, insisting strongly on the exorbitant power of the crown, and increase of corrupt influence; observing also, that it was doubtless galling to the house to be instructed in their duty by the petitioners; but they ought to recollect that it was their own fault; for what these petitioners demanded, ought to have originated within their own walls: they were representatives of the people, and pledged to a faithful discharge of their duty.

Such an effect had the arguments of Dunning and the authority of the speaker with the country gentlemen, that ministers became alarmed. The lord advocate, Mr. Dundas, attempted to stifle inquiry, by moving that the chairman should leave the chair; but

failing in this, he proposed an amendment, by prefixing the words, 'it is now necessary to declare,' to the original proposition: and this was acceded to by Mr. Fox, though its aim was to convert a general declaration into a temporary assertion, which might at any future period be retracted. The amended resolution was carried by a majority of eighteen; and Mr. Dunning, pursuing his success, proposed and carried his second proposition, 'that it was competent to the house at any time to examine and correct abuses in the expenditure of the civil list.' A third motion, strongly deprecated, like that preceding it, by lord North, was also carried by Mr. Thomas Pitt, affirming 'that it was the duty of the house to provide immediate and effectual redress of the abuses complained of in the petitions.' Lastly, it was moved by Mr. Fox, after one o'clock in the morning, that the resolutions should be immediately reported: lord North in vain opposed the motion, as violent, arbitrary, and unusual; the report was brought up, and the house adjourned.

On the tenth of April, the committee being reassembled, Mr. Dunning, after congratulating the house on its late decisions, moved and carried a resolution for producing an account of all sums of money paid to members of parliament from any portion of the public revenue: he next proposed a resolution for rendering certain officers, such as the treasurers of the chamber and of the household, clerks of the green cloth, and others, incapable of sitting in the house of commons; but this met with a strenuous opposition, and was only carried by a majority of two. Thus far the patriotic party had triumphantly proceeded; when the sudden illness of the speaker, on the fourteenth of April, obliged the commons to adjourn to the twenty-fourth: on that day Mr. Dunning moved for an address to his majesty, deprecating 'the dissolution or prorogation of parliament before proper measures were adopted to fulfil the objects of the petitions.' He sarcastically alluded to the unusual fulness of the house, hoping that the new comers would increase the majority of the sixth of April; and Mr. Thomas Pitt, who

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seconded the motion, after reading some resolutions of a county meeting in Cambridgeshire, approving of the late decisions, conjured the house not to repress the budding confidence of the nation, or inflame popular resentment.

The most conspicuous opponent of this motion was Mr. Adam, a young member of high promise, who, in a speech of extraordinary ability, exposed the danger of impelling the multitude toward an active interference in matters of government: he drew a striking picture of the progress of popular agitation to revolution and anarchy in the time of Charles I., allowing that the opponents of the court began from justifiable and generous motives. Mr. Fox made a spirited reply, and gave a different interpretation to that period of history; ascribing the fate of Charles and the national calamities, to the obstinacy and insincerity of that monarch's character, who by rejecting the wishes and deceiving the expectations of his people in the early part of his reign, provoked them to resistance which ended in his own destruction: ministers, he said, had spared no pains, and abstained from no artifices, to induce members to abandon their own glorious vote of the sixth of April; to carry which into execution the present motion was absolutely necessary: the house was pledged to the people, and he cautioned them against violating such a pledge: the motion, having been reprobated by lord George Germaine, and ridiculed by Mr. Dundas, was finally rejected by a majority of 254 against 203.

After this division, Mr. Fox rose up to speak; but the ministerial party, dreading the castigation which his eloquence might inflict, endeavored to prevent him from being heard; and an extraordinary scene of uproar and confusion ensued: as soon, however, as order could be enforced, the deserters were condemned to hear their treachery reprobated in one of the severest philippics ever delivered within the walls of the house; and it was predicted that such gross tergiversation would meet with merited punishment at the approaching election. Lord North endeavored

to throw the shield of his wit and eloquence over those who had subjected themselves to Mr. Fox's reproaches: a proposition of serjeant Adair to withhold the supplies, was negatived without a debate; and a motion for the chairman's quitting the chair was carried on the twenty-sixth of May by a majority of forty-three. Such was the termination of one of the most critical struggles which had taken place during this reign.

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Much astonishment was expressed, not only at the encouragement which Mr. Dunning's motion received from a large party who had so warmly taken up the American war, but at the sudden change of sentiment which was now exhibited. Some historians have ascribed this to influence and corruption, inconsistency and treachery; others deduce it from the peculiar temper of the times, the state of the ministry, and the violence of opposition.

From the king's correspondence with lord North, it appears that the minister still continued so uneasy in office, and so anxious to resign it, that his majesty had authorized lord Thurlow, in December last, to attempt a coalition, promising to 'blot out from his remembrance any events which had displeased him,' if they who joined his extended ministry would engage 'to employ all possible means to keep the empire intire; to prosecute the present *just and unprovoked war*, in all its branches, with the utmost vigor; and to treat past measures with proper respect.' Though, according to lord Thurlow's representation of the matter, no proposal was made to the members of opposition, yet he felt the pulse of some leading men: but as they seemed disinclined to engage for themselves, and still more for others, his majesty remarks, with some asperity, 'I see what treatment I am to expect if I call them into my service: to obtain their support, I must deliver my person, my principles, and my dominions into their hands.' In March, this year, he answers, evidently to a hint respecting American independence, 'that his love of this country makes him hope he never may live to see the day when

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it shall be granted; for with it he shall despair of Great Britain being preserved from a state of inferiority.' On the 19th of May he again strongly exhorts lord North not to retire from office; and in July, to something like a direct proposal from opposition, through Mr. Frederic Montague, he replies, 'that an evasive answer about America will not be accepted, and the point of leaving the question open is quite inadmissible.'

The distracted condition of Ireland, the unsuccessful progress of the war, and the degraded state of the British navy, excited much alarm and indignation: divisions in the cabinet, the easy temper of lord North, and the unpopularity of lords Sandwich and Germaine, increased the national ferment, and induced several independent members to second the efforts of opposition; while the known integrity of lord Rockingham and sir George Savile, the manly spirit of Fox, and the splendid talents of Burke, inspired many with hope and confidence; inclining them to measures that were likely to substitute an efficient for a distracted administration: but when Mr. Dunning brought forward his second resolution, the violence of opposition was found to have disgusted many of their new adherents; and, as we have seen, it was carried only by a majority of two; while the illness of the speaker occasioned an adjournment, and allowed time for reflection: after the recess, opposition, too eager in pursuing their advantage, alarmed all moderate men by a proposition which appeared to aim at annihilating the power of the crown, and reviving the tyranny of the long parliament: hence the majority of fifty-one, which threw out Mr. Dunning's last motion.⁸

On the twenty-third of March, lord North informed the house, that, as the East India company had not made satisfactory proposals for the renewal of their charter, he would move that the speaker should give them the three years' notice, ordered by act of parliament, previous to a dissolution of their monopoly;

⁸ See Adolphus, vol. iii. p. 229.

also that the sum of £4,200,000, due from the public to the company, should be paid on the twenty-fifth of April, 1783, agreeably to the tenor of the said act. Mr. Fox inveighed against this measure, as tending to deprive us of our East Indian, as well as our American possessions: but lord North answered, that he intended nothing more than to prefer a legal claim on behalf of the public, to the reversion of an undoubted right; and the proposed notice did not preclude ulterior arrangements. The company, as established, was certainly the best medium for drawing home the revenues of the East Indies; but if its members were so unreasonable as not to offer a fair bargain to the public, a new corporation might be formed, and measures taken to prevent or remedy the threatened evils. These representations appeared so fair, that the motion was carried without a division.

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On the fifth of May, general Conway offered a plan of reconciliation with our American provinces, by removing all just causes of complaint, without acknowledging their independence; but this was rejected as degrading and ineffectual. Repeated motions were made in both houses, inquiring into the army extraordinary, and other articles of public expenditure, as well as for the removal of ministers; but all were ineffectual: in the mean time, associations continued to be formed in the metropolis, and other parts of the country, as well for the reformation of abuses, as for a change of men and measures.

But in the midst of this anti-ministerial hostility, and of associations for storming the citadel of power, an occurrence took place, which tended to damp the spirit of opposition, and to promote unanimity among all ranks, by displaying the dangers of popular violence, and the atrocities to which a multitude is liable to be impelled, whatever may be the motives which induces it to assemble. The successful resistance made by Scottish zealots against admitting the late acts in favor of Roman catholics, encouraged some fanatics in England to expect, that, by efforts equally vigorous, a repeal of the obnoxious ordinances might be procured.

Popular
rage
against the
catholics.

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Accordingly, a protestant club was instituted, which contained some well-meaning, but many ill-informed persons, who, by a false estimate of the present state and prospects of popery, gradually worked themselves up to that intolerant spirit which distinguished papists themselves during the worst eras of clerical usurpation. The active genius of fanaticism being once let loose, politics mingled themselves in the question; eighty-five corresponding societies were established under the specious pretext of supporting protestantism; and the parent institution soon acquired consequence in the eyes of the multitude, by a titled president being placed in its chair. The person who conferred and received this distinction was lord George Gordon, a young man of eccentric disposition, dissipated habits, and weak judgment: endowed with some talent for speaking, and ambitious of notoriety, he had taken an active share in the Scotch proceedings, and now entered eagerly into the views of these English fanatics, over whom he obtained unbounded influence; engaging them to adopt his inflammatory propositions as resolutions of the society. On Monday, the twenty-ninth of May, a meeting was held at Coachmakers-hall, to consider about a petition for repealing the act in favor of papists; when lord George, in a furious harangue, descanted on the alarming progress made by the church of Rome; urging his hearers to obstruct its march by approaching parliament with a resolute tone, and by showing to their representatives a determination to uphold religious freedom at the hazard of life itself: he professed himself ready to head them in the cause of conscience and of their country; but if they meant to waste their time in mock debates and idle opposition, he recommended them to choose another leader.

Riots in
London.

A speech so adapted to the passions and prejudices of its hearers produced a resolution, that the whole association would meet, on the following Friday, in St. George's-fields, and thence proceed to the house of commons. Accordingly, at ten o'clock in the morning of that day, more than 40,000 persons, wearing blue

cockades,—inscribed with the words ‘No Popery,’—marched from the place appointed, in four divisions; and having assembled before the house of parliament, they blocked up its avenues, insulted many of the members, and even attempted to force their way into the passages: when lord George moved that the commons should take into immediate consideration a petition which he had presented, they refused, under a plea that no act could be free while they were surrounded by a clamorous and licentious mob. During the discussion of this subject, his lordship, being imperatively called on by colonel Holroyd to remove the blue cockade from his hat, timidly obeyed the order: but, as he took several occasions to leave the house, for the purpose of addressing the people, and exhorting them to perseverance, many members began to fear that the mob would break into the house; when general Murray, a veteran officer, and uncle to the duke of Athol, is said to have thus addressed the demagogue:—‘If one only of your lawless followers enters, I shall consider rebellion as begun, and will plunge my sword into your bosom as its promoter.’ This resolute speech is supposed to have restrained the violence of the leader, and to have prevented the audacious intrusion of his followers: in the evening, some troops arrived; and the multitude, retiring from Palace-yard, proceeded to demolish two chapels belonging to the Sardinian and Bavarian embassies. On Saturday they remained quiet; but, being encouraged by the timidity and negligence of the city magistrates, they re-assembled on Sunday; and, directing their course to Moorfields, where many catholics dwelt, they destroyed their chapels and dwelling-houses.

On Monday, these furious bigots renewed their outrages; being joined by a number of those profligate and disorderly wretches who are always found among the dense masses of a populous city. Lawless atrocity being now united with religious frenzy, the ferocious multitude added plunder to conflagration, and destroyed the houses of protestants as well as of papists: in the mean time, the constituted authorities, as if

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paralysed, remained passive spectators of the scene; and a panic pervaded all the respectable classes of society. A proclamation, indeed, was issued, offering a reward of £500 for the discovery of the incendiaries who set fire to the chapels of the ambassadors; and some persons charged with this crime were sent to Newgate, under an escort of soldiers, who were exposed to violent insults in the performance of their duty. On Monday, the chief vengeance of the mob was directed against the mansion of sir George Savile, who had introduced the obnoxious bill into the house of commons: frequent attempts were made to set it on fire; but it was saved by the interference of friends, who rallied round him in this hour of difficulty and danger. On Tuesday, which day had been fixed by the commons for considering the petition of the association, a mob again surrounded the house and insulted its members; who, after passing some resolutions adapted to the occasion, immediately adjourned. All the troops in town were now distributed so as to assist the civil powers in protecting the lives and properties of his majesty's subjects; but the precaution of ministers had been neither proportionate to the danger, nor adopted when the first appearance of tumult demanded vigorous measures: robbery and destruction, therefore, rapidly increased; many private houses were burnt; and the insurgents, having set fire in the evening to the prison of Newgate, liberated more than 300 ruffians to augment their ferocious bands. Flushed with success, they now directed their attacks against the most active magistrates; and with peculiar exultation destroyed the house and effects of sir John Fielding: rushing thence to Bloomsbury-square, they assailed the residence of the illustrious lord Mansfield; plundered and destroyed the valuable furniture, pictures, statues, and other ornaments with which it was decorated; and, proceeding to the library, committed to the flames, not only his books, but the inestimable manuscripts which contained the treasures of his judicial and legislative wisdom: a party of the guards fired once or twice on the rioters without checking

their progress; but the earl and his lady effected their escape by a back door, and were received by royal hospitality into Buckingham-house. On Wednesday, proceeding to Holborn, the mob set fire to Mr. Langdale's great distilleries, which contained an immense quantity of spirituous liquors; and many of the intoxicated wretches perished in the flames which themselves had lighted: different gangs now undertook and effected the demolition of various prisons: all trade was at a stand; houses and shops were closed; men and women were flying in consternation, trying to secure their most valuable effects, or to deposit their helpless infants in places of safety; yells of barbarous triumph were mingled with shrieks of horror and the discharges of musketry; while masses of flames were seen issuing from the King's-bench and Fleet prisons, New Bridewell, the toll-gates of Blackfriars-bridge, the distilleries in Holborn, and houses in all quarters; so that the terrified inhabitants augured, with unspeakable horror, destruction to the whole metropolis.

In this great emergency a privy council had been convened, at which the king himself presided: but irresolution still prevailed, nor was any thing decisive suggested; until, as the members were rising, his majesty anxiously asked if no effectual measure could be recommended? The attorney general replied, that he knew but one;—that of declaring the tumult a rebellion, and authorising the military to act without the license or presence of a magistrate: the council still hesitated to adopt this advice, though several members acknowledged its propriety; when the king, with a proper effort of moral courage, took the responsibility on himself; desiring the attorney general to make out the order, which he immediately signed. Proclamation to this effect was not issued till the evening; but the advantage of it soon appeared: a detachment of militia, under colonel Holroyd, first checked the rioters; and the guards dispersed them at Blackfriars-bridge, after many had been pushed over the balustrade into the river.

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This resolution to employ military aid was adopted just in time to avert national ruin: the infuriated multitude, having attacked the pay office, directed their attempts against the Bank of England; while a strong detachment was hastening to co-operate with these incendiaries by cutting the pipes of the New River: the soldiers, however, were now assembled in such force, and inspired with such resolution, as effectually to resist, and finally to overpower the assailants at all points. On Thursday, the inhabitants began to recover from their consternation; though the shops continued shut, and detached parties still created disturbance: no attempt, however, was made to rally at night; so that on Friday tranquillity was restored; and lord George Gordon, being apprehended by a warrant from the secretary of state, was committed to prison.

It was fortunate for the country that this insurrection began without any settled or concerted plan; and that private houses were the first objects of popular fury, before rapacity, added to fanaticism, impelled the mob to attack the Bank, and other public offices: it was also fortunate that the king determined to exert that moral courage which so eminently distinguished his character, and which saved his capital from destruction. The effects resulting from this outrage on civil authority were of a mixed nature: though unconnected with the great object of the petitions, it disheartened the friends of reform, emboldened the tories to circulate gross accusations against their political opponents, and materially increased the influence of the crown: but the credit of a mob, as a test of public opinion, was lessened; the dangerous consequences of its rash determinations became more evident; and the government was induced in future more readily to oppose the commencement of popular violence by military force. Thus the tumult passed away, but the lessons which it inculcated were not forgotten: they were remembered with peculiar advantage, when the revolutionary tempest was heard in France, and its clouds began to cast their shade upon the shores of Britain.

On the sixth of June, more than 200 members of the house of commons having had the courage to force their way through the banditti that occupied its avenues, passed several spirited resolutions, asserting their own privileges, and appointing a committee of inquiry, as well as an address to his majesty for the prosecution of offenders by the attorney general, and an indemnification to foreign ministers for their losses: they afterwards met on the eighth; but as the city of Westminster was under the operation of martial law, they judged it expedient to adjourn to the nineteenth, that order and tranquillity might be completely restored. On that day, his majesty was pleased to meet his parliament, and exhibit a general view of the measures which had been employed during the suspension of regular government; when all parties concurred in applauding their sovereign's conduct, though some members censured the tardy conduct of ministers in providing for the defence of the metropolis. In the house of lords, when the question respecting the legality of military interference was introduced, this important point was accurately examined and constitutionally settled by lord Mansfield, whose sufferings in the late unhappy tumults increased the interest with which his high character and attainments were regarded: the sympathy of his hearers rose to the highest pitch, when with much feeling he declared, that he had been obliged to form his opinion without consulting any books on the subject. 'Indeed,' he added, 'I have now no books to consult.'

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Discussions respecting the interference of the military.

Disembarrassing the question from all doubts relative to constructive treason, his lordship proved that the insurgents were guilty both of high treason and of felony: every man might, and if required by a magistrate, must interfere, to prevent acts of felony, treason, and rebellion; what therefore an individual might do, was lawful to any number of persons lawfully assembled: a private man, seeing another commit an unlawful act, might apprehend the offender, and by force compel him to submit, not to the assailant, but to the law; and so might any number of men

Opinion of lord Mansfield.

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assembled, or called together for the purpose: this doctrine, with all the consequences that might flow from it, was indisputable; and was the true foundation for calling in military aid: the persons so called in were, in the eye of the law, mere private individuals, not differing in this instance from their fellow-citizens, because they wore red coats. 'If a military man,' said his lordship, 'exceed the powers with which he is invested, he must be tried and punished, not by the martial code, but by the laws of the realm:' consequently, it was an ill-founded apprehension, that the metropolis was under martial law, or that the military had more power since the riots than before.

The house of commons having resolved itself into a committee, the petitions for repealing the bill which had been made an occasion of so much mischief were taken into consideration; but as no evil appeared to have proceeded from the relaxation of that penal law which had been mitigated, the house adopted five resolutions, on the motion of Mr. Burke, expressing satisfaction in the law as it now existed, together with an abhorrence of the late tumults, and of the misrepresentations which had led to them. As the protestant association, however, still continued to press its demands on the legislature, a bill was brought in, by way of compromise, to deprive Roman catholics of the right of keeping schools in which protestants were taught: it passed the commons; but the lords threw it out, as carried by the fear of popular outrage, and therefore derogatory to the dignity and independence of parliament.

The supplies for 1780 amounted to £21,196,496: the number of seamen and marines employed was 85,000; and 35,000 British troops, beside the forces abroad: the extraordinaries of the army amounted to £2,418,805. To provide for these expenses, in addition to the usual resources from land and malt, exchequer bills were renewed to the same amount as last year. The sinking-fund was to give two millions and a half: £12,000,000 were borrowed on annuities, and £480,000 raised by lottery. Increased duties were

laid on malt, spirits, wines of Portugal and France, Newcastle coals, exported salt, licenses to sell tea and coffee, legacies, and advertisements in newspapers: a vote of credit also for £1,000,000 was passed in addition to these supplies; and on the eighth of July this long and important session closed.

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The rioters in London and Middlesex were tried at the Old Bailey, a special commission being issued for those in Surrey; the principal commissioner being Mr. Wedderburne, as chief justice of the common pleas, who was raised to the peerage by the title of lord Loughborough. All proceedings were conducted on the humane principles of British jurisprudence; no man being convicted but on the fullest testimony, and no plea of extenuation disregarded. Lord George Gordon, after having in vain petitioned the house of commons for his discharge, was injudiciously tried for treason, instead of being indicted for high crimes and misdemeanors: his acquittal was principally due to the talents and eloquence of his counsel, Messrs. Kenyon and Erskine, who argued that his motives were not treasonable or malicious. He soon afterwards fell into general contempt, renounced the Christian for the Jewish faith, and died in Newgate, where he had undergone a long imprisonment for various libels against foreign potentates, on the first of November, 1793.

Rioters
tried.

As the nation was now relieved from all danger of internal commotion, as well as from any apprehension of foreign invasion, and as it was not the intention of government to grant the petitions of the people, it became necessary to provide means for defeating their applications: accordingly parliament was dissolved in the autumn, and a new one summoned to meet on the thirty-first of October. The elections, except in a few instances, were not strongly contested: Mr. Fox, after a severe struggle with lord Lincoln, was returned for Westminster, and Mr. Burke was rejected at Bristol. The charges against him were four: his not visiting the city more frequently; his support of lord Beauchamp's insolvent debtors' bills; the Irish trade acts; and the relief granted to Roman catholics. Each of

New
elections.

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these he defended with great ability; rendering the common and temporary affair of an election a medium of propagating great and permanent political truths. 'The charges against me,' said he, 'are all of one kind; that I have pushed the principles of justice and benevolence too far; farther than a cautious policy would warrant, and farther than the opinions of many would go along with me: in every accident that may happen to me through life, in pain, in sorrow, in depression, and distress, I will call to mind this accusation, and be comforted.' He declined a contest, and was again chosen, as its representative, by the borough of Malton. At this period William Pitt the second was an unsuccessful candidate to represent the university of Cambridge; but in January following he was returned for the close borough of Appleby, by the interest of sir James Lowther. Our attention must now be directed to the military and naval affairs of Great Britain, which this year presented no very favorable appearance.

Armed
neutrality.

We were not only involved in a war with our colonies, which had the assistance of France and Spain; but a strong combination was formed against us by several powers, constituting what has been called 'the armed neutrality.'⁴ This association originated with Russia, which had been at first regarded by ministers as their best ally in the present crisis: but though it had its origin in the north, its influence soon spread over the rest of Europe, and was not likely to be again lost sight of. By it the contracting parties pledged themselves to maintain the principle, 'that free ships make free goods, with the exception of arms and munitions of war;'

⁴ The first declaration of an armed neutrality made by Russia was February 28, 1780; and it demanded, 1. That neutral vessels should sail free from port to port, and along the coasts of the belligerent powers. 2. That the property of enemies should be free in neutral vessels, except arms and the actual munitions of war. 3. An accurate definition of what a blockaded harbor should be. 4. That this definition should serve as a rule in judging of the lawfulness of prizes. Denmark acceded to this measure at the invitation of Russia, July 9, 1780, and Sweden, July 21. Prussia, May 8, 1781, and Austria, October 9. Portugal, July 13, 1782. Holland was anticipated by a declaration of war, December 20, 1780. In her answers England expressed no explicit opinion respecting the principle. It was recognised by Spain and France.—Heeren, vol. ii. p. 100.

—a principle inconsistent with the right hitherto acknowledged as belonging to belligerent powers, of searching the vessels of neutral states. Such was the result of sir James Harris's⁵ subtle negotiations, intrigues, and bribery, at the court of St. Petersburg. Thither he was sent, as already has been observed, to conciliate an alliance offensive and defensive with Russia: but he soon found all his views thwarted by antagonists more subtle, and far more unprincipled than himself; nor had he anything in his power to offer which could induce Catharine to engage in hostilities for the sake of this country. 'I would do every thing to serve you,' she says, '*except involving myself in the war*: I should be answerable to my subjects, my successor, and perhaps to all Europe, for the consequences of such conduct.' Yet urged by ministers at home, and trusting in his own powers of persuasion, he went on grasping at his object with an eagerness almost childish: in his delusion respecting it he had recommended and procured an autograph letter from our virtuous monarch to the modern Messalina, soliciting, in no very dignified terms, a naval demonstration on her part to intimidate our enemies: he had also pressed upon, and obtained from, the British court, a modification of our belligerent right of search, in favour of Russia; but in vain were offers and concessions made to this crafty sovereign, whose ardent wish was to involve the maritime powers in bitter hostility, and thus prevent them from interfering with her designs in the East: this was the obvious key to her whole conduct, though it does not seem to have suggested itself to our ambassador, whom she kept in extraordinary good humour with himself by lavish compliments and flattering attentions. 'If these distinctions and marks of good will' (says sir James in a letter to lord Stormont), 'both in the sovereign and her principal favorite, cover any insidious and false design, the intrigue is too artfully concerted for me to unravel it; and if in my description of the sentiments

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⁵ He had been made knight of the bath, for his zealous attempts, rather than for any services performed.

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of this court I deceive your lordship, it is because I am myself most egregiously deceived.’⁶ And most egregiously deceived he was: for notwithstanding the most extravagant protestations of friendship toward this country, his very next despatch announced the blow struck against British interests in an ‘armed neutrality.’ Alarmed at this and other indications of malevolence, sir James conveyed to his government a proposal, suggested by Potemkin, as a means to cut up by the roots a confederacy, which the empress and her ministers, the better to deceive him, always affected to laugh at as the ‘Armed Nullity:’ this proposal, which contemplated the cession of Minorca, then held by us, to Russia, was actually authorized by our government; and probably Gibraltar itself, that key of the Mediterranean and stronghold of our naval power, would have been given up for the friendship of this abandoned woman; but all offers were vain: one, and one only way, lay open to the assistance sought from Russia—this was strict reciprocity in the alliance defensive and offensive proposed by England herself. Aid us in our attack upon Turkey, and we will give you all the assistance in our power against your rebellious colonies: but this was not what Great Britain desired; the offensive part of the alliance was to be a dead letter on her side; and our imbecile ministers, with their ambassador, expected thus to overreach the wily Catharine and her crafty counsellors! They were not, however, left long to enjoy that fool’s paradise: after she had assumed a high tone, in offering herself as an armed mediatrix, together with the Austrian emperor, for a general peace, evidently with an intention of establishing the principles of her ‘armed neutrality’ on the destruction of our maritime code, she left us, with contempt upon her brow and insult in her tongue, to prosecute her cherished designs against Turkey; while sir James Harris, after having been long tantalized by alternate hopes and disappointments, found that all his powers of diplomatic craft had been exercised in deceiving himself: depressed in

⁶ Diaries, &c. of Lord Malmsbury, vol. i. p. 284.

spirits, and suffering in health from the severity of a Russian climate, he solicited and at length obtained his recall. At this time also the native powers of India had entered into a formidable coalition, under French influence, for driving us from their territories; while repeated failures both by sea and land had weakened public confidence both in our commanders and our resources: public credit, too, was much depressed; the value of landed property was diminished; trade and manufactures languished; and there was a considerable deficiency in the produce of the revenue: neither must the extraordinary fact be omitted, that the prime minister was, and had long been, holding office, to carry on measures of which his judgment and conscience totally disapproved.⁷

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The first cheering sign of returning fortune arose on that element which seems peculiarly our own. Admiral Rodney having been despatched with a squadron for the relief of Gibraltar, at this time sorely distressed for want of provisions, the Bourbon cabinets expected that he would leave his transports in a certain latitude, to make their own way to the fortress: under this impression, they ordered admiral Don Juan de Langara to proceed with eleven men of war and two frigates to intercept the supply. Rodney had the good fortune, soon after he quitted port, to meet a valuable Spanish convoy with stores for the fleet at Cadiz; when he captured not only fifteen merchant-men, but a new sixty-four gun ship, four frigates, and two corvettes. Soon afterwards, on the sixteenth of January, he encountered Langara near Cape St. Vincent; and having a superior force, he directly bore down on the enemy, taking the lee-gage, in order to prevent them from retreating into their own ports: this mode of conflict threatened peculiar danger to his fleet, as the action commenced about four o'clock P. M.

Rodney's
success
against the
Spaniards.

⁷ This appears from the extracts of his correspondence before referred to. In September or October lord Gower had requested permission to resign, and urged a coalition with a part of the opposition. In reply, lord North combats his intention to resign, as likely to ruin the administration; but adds, 'I have in the argument one disadvantage, which is, that I hold in my heart, and have held for three years past, the same opinion with lord Gower.' What, after this, can be said for the honesty of lord North?

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in a violent gale of wind, and lasted through a dark and tempestuous night. In the first hour of this engagement a Spanish ship of the line blew up with a tremendous explosion, and all on board perished: at six, another struck her colors; and by ten in the morning, the *Monarca*, which was the hindmost of all the enemy's ships, struck to the *Sandwich*, Rodney's flag-ship; when all firing ceased. Four captured ships of the line reached Gibraltar in safety; one that had been taken went on shore, and the English seamen on board became captives; another was lost on the breakers; and several British ships were in great danger among the shoals of San Lucar; nevertheless all escaped; while 2400 of the enemy, with Langara himself, were made prisoners. Even in this successful action Rodney discovered among the superior officers of his fleet those seeds of insubordination, which soon afterwards ripened into a disobedience little short of mutiny, and occasioned him the deepest mortification: he deemed it, however, prudent in the present instance to abstain from censure; and the British public were not aware of the circumstances under which so brilliant an action had been achieved.⁸ He also took this opportunity of doing another great service, not only to his country, but to the cause of humanity: hitherto, British captives in Spain had been treated with great severity; and the strongest constitution could scarcely support for any length of time the hardships of a Spanish prison; Langara's officers and men therefore now expected to meet with a similar fate; but were astonished at receiving very kind and compassionate treatment: having made a strong impression on the minds of the Spaniards by this courteous behaviour, Rodney represented to them the miserable condition of his countrymen, and obtained a promise, that Englishmen, when prisoners in Spain, should be made as

⁸ In a letter to his wife, he says, 'one thing I can say without dread of reproach; that I defy envy, malice, or villany to tax me with not having done my duty to the utmost extent: but without a thorough change in our naval affairs, the discipline of our navy will be lost. I could say much, but will not: you will hear it from themselves. I have done them all like honor; but it was because I would not have the world believe that there were officers slack in their duty. Keep this to yourself.'—*Life of Rodney*, vol. i. p. 230.

comfortable as circumstances would permit. At this period, the name of Rodney, like that of Nelson in later times, filled every breast with hope and confidence; the press teemed with effusions in his honor; and ministers themselves began to look on him as the main stay of their power.⁹

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On the thirteenth of February, sir George relieved Minorca; and having landed provisions and stores at Gibraltar, he sailed to fulfil the ulterior object of his commission, after sending home his prizes with a detachment of the channel fleet under admiral Darby: that officer, on his passage, had the good fortune to capture the *Prothée*, a French ship of sixty-four guns, and three vessels laden with military stores intended for the Mauritius.

Rodney arrived at St. Lucie on the twenty-eighth of March, with twenty-one ships of the line; and soon afterwards encountered the French fleet of twenty-three, under count de Guichen. By one masterly manœuvre, he gained the wind of his opponent, with a power of choosing his distance; and by another, he contrived to bring his compact line of battle against about half the enemy, sailing in a parallel line on the same tack; so that the two fleets being very near, with the weather-gage in favor of the British, they had the prospect of gaining a decisive victory, by putting before the wind, coming alongside that half opposed to them, and overpowering it before it could be succored by the other. Signals were accordingly made for close conflict, and for each ship to attack her opposite enemy; but both were disobeyed: the leading ship, instead of putting up her helm and bearing down, made sail on the same direction; construing the signal to mean, not that immediately to leeward, but the corresponding ship, that is, the

Rodney engages the French fleet.

⁹ 'It is impossible,' says lady Rodney, in a letter addressed to her husband, after the victory, 'to describe the general applause that is bestowed on you: it is not only a source of gratification to individuals, but to the nation in general; and the ministerial people feel it very sensibly. It is a lucky stroke for them at this juncture. I congratulate you on the thanks of both houses of parliament. I hear the king is exceedingly pleased with you: he said at the drawing-room, that he knew, when Rodney was out, every thing would go well.'—Life of Rodney, vol. i. pp. 259. 263.

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headmost of the line. Many other captains were guilty of the like error; while several kept at a great distance, neglecting repeated signals for lying close; so that the whole advantage of the day was lost, though the admiral himself set a noble example; for he beat three of the enemy's ships successively out of the line, and then bore down on the French admiral, whom, even assisted by two other ships, he fought for an hour and a half with unremitting fury: but though he drove him also out of the line, which then became broken in its centre, the great distance between the British van and rear, with the crippled state of Rodney's own ship and some others, stopped him in the career of victory; and the French fleet escaped into Fort Royal Bay. Never perhaps was a commander placed in more trying circumstances: it was impossible to measure accurately the degrees of delinquency among his officers; or to know whether ignorance, cowardice, or disaffection operated most; which made him indulgently ascribe their conduct to the first and least culpable cause of failure: having singled out one of them,¹⁰ who had most flagrantly disobeyed signals, he put him under arrest, and on the first convenient opportunity brought him to a court-martial, which sentenced him to dismissal from the service: this example had a good effect in restoring discipline; which was farther promoted by the evolutions in which the admiral determined to exercise his ships, and for which the enemy soon gave him an opportunity, by stealing round to windward of Martinique. The British fleet sailed from St. Lucie on the sixth of May, and continued to turn for six days and nights, before they could clear the passage, and get sight of the enemy; during which time there was a continual tacking, sometimes all together, but oftener in succession,—an arduous manœuvre for twenty sail of the line:¹¹ the enemy, having advantage of the wind, were able to hazard or avoid an

¹⁰ Captain Bateman, of the Yarmouth.

¹¹ 'At the beginning of these evolutions, there was a frequent missing of stays, which the admiral lost no opportunity of rebuking; but after the practice of a few days and nights, no such thing occurred.'—*Life of Rodney*, vol. i. p. 276.

engagement at pleasure, and chose the latter alternative. Rodney endeavored to gain the lee-gage, but was unable to succeed: by feigning flight, on the fifteenth, he had almost drawn them to a battle; but after a partial cannonade between the extreme ships on each side, the French retired: on the nineteenth, the British admiral endeavored to turn the enemy's fleet; and from his movements, both lines became so entangled, as to render a conflict unavoidable between the British van and the rear of their opponents; when the latter, after suffering considerable loss, bore away to Martinique; having manifested a conscious inferiority, by firing wholly at our rigging, in order to avoid a general engagement.

The arrival of a Spanish squadron of twelve line of battle ships, with frigates, transports, and 10,000 troops, under Don Solano, seemed to portend ruin to the fleet, as well as to the possessions, of the British in those seas;¹² but this accession of strength eventually proved weakness. A pestilential disorder broke out among the Spanish forces, and a dissention arose between the commanders, which prevented their co-operation: after remaining inactive for several weeks in Port Royal, the combined squadron set sail on the fifth of July for St. Domingo: there they separated; the Spanish admiral proceeding to the Havannah, and the count de Guichen to Cape François, where he remained till the French homeward bound fleet was ready to sail for Europe. Rodney, supposing that he meant to convoy his fleet to a certain latitude, and

¹² At this time, the danger was most imminent, not only from the state of the officers, but of the ships, as appears from the following passage in a letter from lord Sandwich himself to the admiral:—'For God's sake contrive to send home your bad ships: we cannot bear to lose any of the line: our present list is too small; and we shall be open to much censure if we suffer any farther diminution.' 'In how fearfully low estate,' says the author of Rodney's Life, 'as to ships of the line, must the British navy have been left at this most critical juncture! Had not sir George captured the Spanish ships of Langara, which proved an important accession of force to Great Britain; or had the admiral sustained any reverses in the West Indies, which nothing but his extraordinary skill and good conduct prevented, the consequences might have been most fatal to this country, the safety of which mainly, if not intirely, depended on the wisdom and courage of one man.' (vol. i. p. 317.) That this was the case, appears very evident from the following confession of lord Sandwich:—'I know not what to do to find a good second in command for you; but you may depend on my having that matter in my very serious consideration.'—p. 347.

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then proceed to the continent of America, hastened thither, with eleven ships of the line and four frigates, to anticipate his arrival; but though he met not his old enemy, who was actually on his way to France, he had no reason to regret his voyage; for it saved his squadron from one of the most terrific hurricanes that ever desolated the unfortunate islands of the West. Thus, although he had not the satisfaction of carrying the enemy's fleet into a British port; yet by the promptitude and vigor of his movements he completely baffled their designs, obliged them to relinquish whatever enterprises they might have contemplated, and with very limited means provided for the safety of the British colonies in those seas: he then turned his thoughts toward North America, in conformity with a plan proposed by him to government, and sanctioned by a declaration of lord Sandwich;—‘that unless all our commanders in chief take the same line, and consider the king's whole dominions under their care, our enemies must find us unprepared somewhere, and carry their point against us.’

State of
American
affairs.

While Rodney was thus supporting the honor of the British flag on the ocean, the cause of the parent state seemed equally prosperous on the continent, where the affairs of congress were at a very low ebb: the wretched policy of short enlistments obliged Washington to raise a new army every year, under circumstances of such increasing difficulty, that it soon became almost impossible to levy one at all. The alliance with France had raised a delusive notion in the public mind that the war was in a measure finished: and that, as the independence of America had been recognised by so powerful an ally, it could not long be disputed by Great Britain: hence the enthusiasm of the people had greatly subsided; they no longer viewed the contest as one in which each individual had to act in person; but as a common cause, for which they were called on to pay: besides, numbers began to make a private gain of public distress; while pernicious divisions and factions in congress reached such a height, that the prospect of a happy issue

appeared to the commander in chief much more gloomy than at any former period.¹³ The situation of American affairs induced the British general to direct his force against the less populous states of the south, where friends and foes were more equally balanced, and where assistance from other provinces could not be obtained by the enemy without great expense and loss of time.

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The reduction of South Carolina therefore being determined on, sir Henry Clinton sailed with a force of about 5000 men, under convoy of vice-admiral Arbuthnot: after a most unfavorable voyage of seven weeks, they landed on St. John's island, and proceeded to the vicinity of Charleston, situated between the rivers Ashley and Cooper, and defended by a dangerous bar or sand-bank; behind which the deep water formed a convenient station for some American ships of war, the largest of which carried forty-four, and the smallest sixteen guns. The inhabitants, in great consternation, conferred on their governor, John Rutledge, almost dictatorial powers; and with the assistance of French engineers, strengthened their works wherever the town was considered assailable; while general Lincoln, placing the whole chance of saving the province on the fate of its capital, shut himself up in it with 7000 men. Sir Henry Clinton, with due regard to the safety of his troops, made regular approaches, and broke ground at the distance of

Expedition
against
South
Carolina.

¹³ 'I have seen without despondence,' says he, in a private letter, 'even for a moment, the hours which America has styled her gloomy ones; but I have beheld no day since the commencement of hostilities, when I have thought her liberties in such danger as at present. Friends and foes seem now to combine to pull down the goodly fabric we have hitherto been raising at the expense of so much time, blood, and treasure; and unless the bodies politic will exert themselves to bring back things to first principles, correct abuses, and punish our internal foes, inevitable ruin must follow. Indeed, we seem to be verging so fast to destruction, that I am filled with sensations, to which I have been a stranger until these three months. Our enemies behold with exultation and joy how effectually we labor for their benefit; and from being in a state of absolute despair, and on the point of evacuating America, are now on tiptoe: nothing, therefore, in my judgment, can save us but a total reformation in our own conduct, or some decisive turn of affairs in Europe. The former, alas! to our shame be it spoken, is less likely to happen than the latter; as it is now consistent with the views of the speculators, various tribes of money-makers, and stock-jobbers of all denominations, to continue the war for their own private emolument; without considering that this avarice and thirst for gain must plunge every thing, including themselves, in one common ruin.'—*Life of Washington*, in *American National Portrait Gallery*.

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800 yards from the works; but the command of the harbor being requisite, admiral Arbuthnot prepared to pass the bar, whence the enemy's squadron of nine sail retired, after having sunk eleven vessels of different descriptions across the mouth of Cooper river. Fort Moultrie, although it opened a severe and steady fire, did not long prevent him from casting anchor before the town, near to Fort Johnstone.

A resolute refusal being given to the British summons, batteries were opened, and strong bodies despatched, under colonels Tarleton and Webster, to cut off all intercourse between the garrison and the country. Tarleton had the good fortune to disperse a large provincial force at Monk's Corner, capturing all their stores and baggage, with 400 horses; an acquisition of great importance; while his victory secured the passage of Cooper River: aided too by a reinforcement from New York, Clinton was enabled to send another detachment across that river, under the command of lord Cornwallis.

The approaches were now carried on with great vigor; the second parallel was completed on the nineteenth of April, and the third on the sixth of May: the last of these had been pushed so near to the enemy's works, that a considerable portion of its water was drained from the canal: by this time also the British flag was flying on Fort Moultrie; preparations were made to batter the town; and the besieged were summoned to surrender; but they were not yet sufficiently humbled to comply with the terms proposed: hostilities therefore recommenced; the batteries on the third parallel were opened, and the works pushed up to the ditch; when a capitulation was agreed to, on conditions sufficiently mortifying to the provincials. The intire naval force at Charleston was taken or destroyed, with 400 pieces of ordnance and a large quantity of naval stores; while near 7000 prisoners, including the governor, council, regular troops, militia, and about 1000 French and American seamen, fell into our hands. The whole province being subdued by some farther operations, in which colonel Tarleton

particularly distinguished himself, Clinton retired to New York with the main body of his forces, leaving about 4000 under lord Cornwallis. That nobleman seconded the efforts made by sir Henry to re-establish loyalty among the people, and effect a perfect submission to the government of the mother country: his exertions seemed to be attended with success; and numbers flocked to Charleston with professions of attachment, which, however, were found in most instances to have been the dissimulation of policy or the extortion of fear. Being left at liberty to make a move into North Carolina, if it could be done without danger, lord Cornwallis sent some trusty emissaries into that province, informing the loyalists of his intention to proceed thither, and advising them to reap their harvest, collect provisions, and remain tranquil till his arrival: these prudent instructions, however, were disregarded; a body of loyalists, under colonel More, having assembled prematurely in Tryon county, were attacked and routed; while this insurrection was made a pretext for so violent a persecution, that 800 men were compelled to leave the province, and join major M'Arthur in South Carolina.

The Americans, however, were encouraged by the certainty of speedy aid from Virginia, and by a detachment from Washington's army of 6000 troops; beside which, the legislature of Virginia had ordered 5000 men drawn from the militia, to act as a corps of observation: the people also of South Carolina began to manifest a change of disposition: the disloyal, who had accepted protection, complained of compulsion, and plainly manifested their antipathy to the British government; while those who, through principle, had availed themselves of Clinton's proclamation, were indignant at seeing these dissemblers enjoying immunities and advantages, which they were ready to turn against the English on the first opportunity: at length treachery began openly to manifest itself; and one Lisle carried over to the enemy a battalion of militia, with its arms and ammunition: in the mean time, news of the hostile confederacy of neutral states, and of the

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Arrival
of general
Gates.

political dissensions prevailing in England, gave additional spirit to her enemies in the colony; and congress resolved to make strenuous efforts to recover this important member of the union.

The high reputation which general Gates had acquired at Saratoga obtained for him the chief command in this southern department; and his arrival at the scene of action tended to revive hope. Having collected an army of 4000 men, he prepared at once to drive the British from their line of posts across the state of South Carolina, and carry the war up to the gates of Charleston. The renewal of hostilities was begun by colonel Sumter, who had retired, after the capture of that city, to raise troops in North Carolina, and was now joined by the traitor Lisle; but he was repulsed with considerable loss in several attacks on Rocky Mount and Hanging Rock. Intelligence of the enemy's formidable preparations induced lord Cornwallis to repair to Camden, though his effective force scarcely exceeded 2000 men; while that advancing under Gates, together with the militia, led by baron de Kalbe and other officers, amounted to 6000. Notwithstanding this disparity, the British general set out two hours before midnight to attack the enemy, having received intelligence of Gates's intention to advance; and at two o'clock in the morning of the sixteenth of August, the advanced parties met in the woods, where a Maryland regiment was intirely discomfited: after this temporary conflict, both armies, as it were by compact, betook themselves to rest, and waited for the morning light; when lord Cornwallis, on reconnoitring, found his situation extremely eligible: a swamp on either side preserved him from being outflanked, and the narrowness of his front lessened the disadvantage of inferior numbers.

Battle of
Camden.

At dawn, after both armies had formed in two lines, Gates attempted to change the position of two brigades of militia, when the British general commenced a quick and effective attack: the militia immediately gave way, fled in disorder, and threw the whole pressure on the other division, which maintained an obstinate con-

test; until, being attacked on the flank by the cavalry under major Hanger and colonel Tarleton, they were driven into some swamps, and utterly routed: the reserve, consisting of about 2500 regulars, stood their ground firmly for near an hour, but were at length thrown into irretrievable confusion: Gates, who had retired with the militia, endeavored to rally them; but finding all efforts vain, gave up every thing as lost, and scarcely thought himself secure till he was at the distance of 180 miles from the scene of his disaster. All the baggage, stores, and camp equipage, together with seven pieces of cannon, fell into the hands of the victors, who lost but 350 men in killed and wounded; while the enemy left 800 dead on the field, and near 1000 prisoners: the young lord Rawdon¹⁴ particularly distinguished himself in this battle; the advantages of which were completed in the surprise of the bold partisan Sumter, near the Catawba Fords, whose corps of 800 men colonel Tarleton almost annihilated, taking an immense quantity of stores, and recapturing 250 British prisoners.

This victory at Camden was succeeded, on the part of Cornwallis, by acts of questionable severity: he not only sequestered the estates of all who opposed a re-establishment of the royal government, but denounced death against those who, after receiving British protection, should join the enemy; and he actually executed some of those whom he had taken in arms; by which means he inflamed the animosity of the colonists, and afforded them a pretext for retaliation, which they did not overlook. His lordship then marched to reduce North Carolina, and seized on Charlotte-town; but being apprised of the defeat of a loyal militia corps under major Ferguson, who were attacked at King's Mountain by 1500 mounted backwoodsmen armed with rifles, and being also annoyed by the inveterate hostility of the natives, he retreated to his southern station, deferring the prosecution of his enterprise till reinforcements should arrive from New York. General Greene, the trusty friend of

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¹⁴ Afterwards lord Moira, and marquis of Hastings.

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Washington, being appointed by congress to supersede Gates, arrived at Charlotte-town on the second of December, where he found the southern army a mere skeleton, without artillery, baggage, or stores: in his front was an enemy flushed with conquest; around him an exhausted country; and the inhabitants, divided into hostile parties, plundering each other with little less than savage fury: money he had none; but he had a number of active and devoted officers, on whose exertions he could rely, with a promise of reinforcements from the states through which he had passed on his route. No transaction of importance marked the remainder of this year.

During the absence of sir Henry Clinton from New York, general Knyphausen adopted judicious measures for its protection: but though the city, by the extreme severity of the winter, was deprived of that defence which arises from its insular situation, Washington was not in a condition to venture an attack. No enterprise of importance was attempted by the British before the breaking up of the frost, when Knyphausen made an ineffectual attempt in New Jersey to re-establish the ancient government: being joined by Clinton, on his return from Charleston, they burned the town of Springfield, and then retired to New York.

Early this spring, the aspect of American affairs began to change, and the hopes of the colonists to revive. La Fayette, after serving with Washington from the battle of Brandywine to that of Monmouth, had returned to France in order to quicken the exertions of his countrymen; and now presented himself in the American camp with a promise from his sovereign of speedy assistance. In July, a French squadron under M. de Ternay, with 6000 troops, commanded by the count de Rochambeau, arrived at Rhode Island; and, to prevent all jealousy, a commission was sent to Washington, appointing him lieutenant-general in the French armies, and investing him with the chief command in America.

As the French ships lay at Newport, waiting the

arrival of reinforcements, Clinton proposed to admiral Arbuthnot a plan for attacking Ternay, while the troops proceeded up the sound to act by land. The admiral at first declined it, in hopes of meeting the enemy at sea; and deferred his co-operation till the enemy had strongly fortified their position: sir Henry then proceeded with 8000 men to Huntingdon-bay on Long Island: but Washington, having received reinforcements, led his army across the North river, and, rapidly advancing towards Kingsbridge, put a stop to their enterprise.

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About this time it was expected by the French and American commanders, that they would speedily be joined by de Guichen, with a large reinforcement of troops and ships; in which case New York was to be subjected to a combined attack: but intelligence of the count's flight before the genius of Rodney disconcerted all these schemes, and rendered it necessary for Washington and Rochambeau to have a meeting half-way between their respective camps, in order to consult about new measures. While the former was absent from his army on this service, general Arnold, who commanded at West Point, and who had entered into a secret correspondence with sir Henry Clinton for betraying that impregnable post to the British, requested that a trusty person might be sent to expedite the plot.

The person who was selected, or rather who volunteered his services, for this important transaction, was the celebrated major André, adjutant-general of the British army; a young man of high spirit and undaunted courage, in whose ability, prudence, and address, the British general reposed unlimited confidence. He was conveyed by night, under the assumed name of Anderson, from the Vulture sloop of war, to the foot of a hill called the Long Clove, where he found Arnold concealed among some firs; and where he held a conference with him till the approach of day. It was then thought impracticable for André to return on board the sloop, not only from its distance, with an ebb tide, and the hands greatly fatigued, but from the

Treason
of Arnold,
and fate
of major
André.

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hazard of discovery by people on shore, who were constantly watching every movement on the river: with a melancholy kind of presentiment, therefore, he accompanied the gentleman¹⁵ who acted as guide to his house, on the bank of the Hudson. It unfortunately happened, that during the day which he spent there, the Americans at Gallows-Point directed their fire against the Vulture, and obliged her to fall lower down the river: some other difficulties also occurred with the boatmen; and the major was obliged to attempt reaching New York by land. Having gone ashore to meet Arnold in a military uniform, he borrowed a great coat from his host, and departed, still under his guidance, in the direction of White Plains, till he arrived at Pine's bridge on the river Croton: here his conductor, after having given directions regarding the road which he was to pursue, returned to his own house at Fish Kill;¹⁶ and on that very evening supped in company with Washington, who had just returned from visiting the count de Rochambeau.

Major André had not proceeded more than six miles, when he was stopped by three armed militiamen, John Paulding, David Williams, and Isaac Van Vert, who suddenly seized his horse by the bridle in a narrow part of the wood. In this moment of surprise, the confused man, instead of producing a passport given him by Arnold, asked his interrogators whence they came; and to their reply, 'From below,' he imprudently added, 'So do I;' declaring himself, as it were, a British officer, and requesting that he might

¹⁵ Joshua Hett Smith, esq. This gentleman was involved in great calamities through the share he had in the transaction, and very narrowly escaped with his life. On the discovery of André, he was arrested in bed by a French officer, and immediately carried before general Washington, whose address to him was as follows:—'Sir, do you know that Arnold has fled; and that Mr. Anderson, whom you have piloted through our lines, proves to be major John André, adjutant-general of the British army, now our prisoner? I expect him here, under a guard of 100 horse, to meet his fate as a spy; and, unless you confess who were your accomplices, I shall suspend you both on yonder tree.' Mr. Smith, having been subjected to much reproach, afterwards published a narrative of the whole affair, in which he accounted for the part he had taken, by declaring that he was wholly ignorant of Arnold's plot, and had been imposed on by the representations of that officer, under whose passport he conveyed André to the conference.

¹⁶ 'He was affected,' says Mr. Smith, 'at parting, and offered me a valuable gold watch, in remembrance of him, which I refused.'—Narrative, p. 48.

not be detained, as he was on urgent business : the men, however, whose suspicions were excited, resisted all entreaties, though backed by the offer of his purse and watch, as well as by the promise of a large reward : taking him therefore aside to search him, they found several papers secreted in his boots ; after which they conducted him to the nearest American out-post at North Castle, and delivered him over to lieutenant-colonel Jameson, who was stationed there with a party of dragoons. The unfortunate major still passed himself under the name of Anderson, lest any discovery should be made which could involve Arnold, before that officer had time to provide for his safety : with this view, he requested and obtained permission to send a note, informing him of Mr. Anderson's detention ; while the papers discovered in Arnold's handwriting, all relating to the forces and defences at West Point, were forwarded to Washington, with a letter also from André, declaring himself adjutant-general of the British army, but exculpating himself from the imputation of being a spy ; since he had come on shore under the sanction of a passport, or flag of truce, transmitted to him by Arnold, who was, at that period, a general in the American army, and of course authorised to grant it. Washington was then returning from his conference with count Rochambeau at Hartford, and the messenger missed him by taking a different route ; so that the letter giving information of Anderson's capture, reached Arnold first. Immediately on the receipt of it, he sprang upon the messenger's horse ; dashed down a steep hill to the river, where passage boats were stationed ; and leaping into one of them, ordered the crew to row him instantly to the Vulture : he had scarcely passed Verplank's Point, when colonel Hamilton arrived there with Washington's order to stop him ; but he was now in safety ; and on his arrival at New York received the commission of a brigadier-general in the British service. The life of André, however, became the forfeit of his zeal : being brought before Washington, he neither concealed nor palliated any thing relating to himself, but observed

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the most guarded caution on every subject that might criminate others; while the candor and magnanimity of his conduct, united with the ease and dignity of his deportment, inspired a strong sympathy for him in the American army.

His case was submitted by Washington to a board of general officers, of which baron de Stuben and la Fayette were members; Greene being its president: no precise charge was exhibited against him; as the board intended to govern itself intirely by his answers, to their interrogatories: by means of these, reiterated and modified, they extracted from the unfortunate prisoner something like an acknowledgement, that he could not return on board the Vulture under the sanction of the flag which brought him ashore: hence they inferred, that he did not conceive himself under the protection of that flag, after he was once landed within the American lines; and on this inference they adjudged him to suffer death as a spy, agreeably to the law and usage of nations.¹⁷

From the moment of his capture, no exertions were spared by sir Henry Clinton to rescue a man to whom he was strongly and sincerely attached: after promulgation of the sentence, he deputed lieutenant-colonel Robertson to lay before Washington such facts as could not be stated to the board; urging it as a point of high concern to humanity, that he should fully understand the whole business, before he proceeded to carry their judgment into execution. General Greene was deputed by the commander in chief to receive the statement; but no argument or solicitation, no offer to exchange any prisoner for the major, no proposal of

¹⁷ Mr. Sparks in his *Life of Washington* observes, 'that a board of officers was summoned, and directed to inquire into the case of major André, report the facts, and give their opinion, both in regard to the nature of his offence, and to the punishment which ought to be awarded. Various papers were laid before the board, and André himself was questioned, and desired to make such statements and explanations as he chose. After a full investigation the board reported, that the prisoner came on shore in the night, to hold a private and secret interview with general Arnold; that he changed his dress within the American lines, and passed the guards in a disguised habit, and under a feigned name; that he was taken in the same disguised habit, having in his possession several papers, which contained intelligence for the enemy; and that he ought to be considered as a spy, and according to the law and usage of nations to suffer death.'

referring the case to disinterested foreigners, no threat of retaliation, or appeal to humanity, had the slightest effect: Washington justified the decision of the board; Greene was strongly disinclined to revise the sentence; and la Fayette is said to have urged on the fate of the unfortunate captive in a manner much at variance with his chivalrous character.

That compassion which seemed banished from the breasts of their superiors was amply displayed by the subalterns and privates of the American, and by all ranks of the British army: they were unable to contemplate without emotion so amiable and accomplished a young man doomed in the prime of life to an ignominious death, for an act which they could not connect with dishonorable motives, and which appeared only by a forced construction to bring him under so dreadful a penalty.

The conduct of the unfortunate officer himself corresponded with the most honorable principles and the finest feelings: during his examination he studiously avoided every disclosure that could implicate others, and heard the sentence of his judges without alarm or dejection; acknowledging the polite attentions he had received, and only begging that he might die the death of a soldier. From the day of his trial to that preceding his execution, there was a constant transmission of flags on this unhappy subject; during which interval, he calmly composed his mind with christian fortitude for the result; and, when he was informed that the die was cast, and his destiny fixed by the usages of war, he wrote a letter to Washington, replete with dignified and pathetic sentiments; imploring him, that if aught in his character impressed that general with esteem towards him; if aught in his misfortunes marked him as the victim of policy,¹⁸ and

¹⁸ Unfortunately for major André, he was almost a necessary victim of policy; and this is the best apology that can be made for Washington's unrelenting severity towards so amiable a young officer. No one acquainted with the character of Washington, can think that resentment had any place in his mind on this sad occasion. In fact, the American army at this time was thinned by desertions; spies were in all their quarters; plots were entered into against their most distinguished men; and if the treachery of Arnold had succeeded, probably the cause of American independence had been lost. He felt it necessary to make a great

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not of resentment,—he might experience the operation of those feelings in his breast, by being informed that he was not to die on a gibbet: this letter was not answered, though Washington consulted the board of officers regarding its contents.¹⁹ At length, the appointed day arrived; and on the second of October, this unhappy victim of martial law was led out to the place of execution, whither he proceeded arm in arm with the officers of his guard; exhibiting a manly firmness, a dignity of deportment, and a serenity of countenance, which drew tears of sensibility from many an eye: when he approached the fatal spot, and beheld the preparations which announced the disgrace attached to his last moments, he paused, as if absorbed in reflection; then, turning to the officer next him, he exclaimed, ‘What! must I die in this manner?’ Being told that it was so ordered, he quickly recovered his fortitude; and said;—‘I am reconciled, and submit to my fate: it will be but a momentary pang.’ With great composure, he performed the last sad offices for

example; and the effect of it is said to have been complete. The following anecdote, however, if it can be relied on, as given in the life of Aaron Ogden, in the American Portrait Gallery, shows that there was one condition on which the life of André would have been spared; but in that case the example would have been made still more effective. Captain Ogden, then commanding a company in the light infantry under la Fayette, received an order from the commander in chief, to attend at head quarters next morning, at eight o’clock: he was there met by Washington, alone, at his tent door, who put into his hand a packet addressed to sir Henry Clinton at New York; directing him to carry it, with a flag of truce, under an escort of twenty-five dragoons, to the nearest of the enemy’s posts, and deliver it to the commanding officer; also that he should take the best horse he could obtain, and call on the marquis la Fayette for special instructions. These were given to him by la Fayette in the following terms:—‘That he should, if possible, get within the British lines at Paulus-hook, and continue there during the night; and that he should privately assure the commanding officer, without taking him aside, that he, captain Ogden, was instructed to say, that if sir Henry Clinton would in any way whatever suffer Washington to get Arnold into his power, major André should be immediately released.’ Captain Ogden so managed as to get into the post, where he was politely offered accommodation for the night. No opportunity of delivering his message presented itself till supper; when he sat next to the commanding officer, into whose ear the communication was whispered: on receiving it, he immediately rose from table, and returned in about two hours from New York, the head quarters of sir Henry Clinton, with a laconic answer, which was communicated in the same private manner:—‘that a deserter was never given up:’ he then added aloud—‘Captain Ogden, your horse will be ready for your departure early in the morning.’

¹⁹ It is said, that, overcome by remorse and sorrow, mingled with esteem, they were for granting this request; till Greene, the president, insisted that his crime was that of a common spy, and that the service and good of the American cause required the most exemplary punishment: ‘for,’ said he, ‘if he is shot, mankind will think there are circumstances in his case which intitled him to notice and indulgence.’—Smith’s Narrative, p. 166.

himself, and requested all around him to bear witness to the world, 'that he died like a brave man.'

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Arnold, in vindication of his conduct, published an address to the Americans, in which he exposed the factious and false pretences, by which congress had effected a separation of the colonies from the mother country; and had changed the whole nature of the war, by an alliance with the French, their natural enemies. He declared, that, preferring the sincere overtures of Great Britain to the insidious offers of France, he had long determined to retain his command only till an opportunity should occur of surrendering it; and of accomplishing some decisive action, which would prevent the farther effusion of blood.

In a subsequent proclamation, addressed to those officers and soldiers of the provincial army who had the real interests of their country at heart, and were resolved to be no longer dupes of congress or of France, he made a strong appeal; but without effect: his account of his own conduct and motives was examined with great severity; and when he complained of the insults and hardships he had undergone, the wounds he had received, and the little hope he entertained of receiving any recompense from an ungrateful country, no one allowed this to be a sufficient justification of his attempt to betray his country's cause: it was impossible that he could deceive himself by such an illusion; the very efforts which he made to excuse his actions showed how the stings of conscience were rankling in his heart; and there can be little doubt but that Washington was right, when he wrote in a letter to a friend as follows:—'André has met his fate with that fortitude which was expected from an accomplished man and a gallant officer; but I am mistaken if Arnold is not undergoing at this time the torments of a mental hell.'

The day after André's execution at Tappan, the continental army broke up from that vicinity, and removed first to Píramus, and soon afterwards to the neighborhood of the Passaick Falls; but no important

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military transaction distinguished the remainder of this campaign: Washington's great aim was accomplished, while he kept Clinton in constant apprehension of an attack on New York, and prevented him from sending reinforcements to lord Cornwallis, whose situation in the south was becoming very critical. In fact, the greatest pains and the most admirable finesse were employed by the American commander for this purpose; letters, expressive of such an intention, were written with a design that they should be intercepted; pretended deserters also gave false information to the British general; who by these measures, and a variety of judicious movements made by his antagonist, was completely deceived.

Rodney
returns to
the West
Indies.

Sir George Rodney's observations, while he remained on the American coast, regarding the conduct of the war, were not very favorable to the British commanders:—'I must freely confess,' he says, in a despatch to lord Sandwich, November 13, 1780, 'there appears to me an inconceivable slackness in every branch of the war; and that briskness and activity, which are so necessary, and ought to animate the whole, to bring it to a speedy conclusion, have intirely forsaken it.' Soon after this declaration, he left the American shores, and returned to his old station in the West Indies. In the European seas, British commerce suffered some blows so severe as to spread a general gloom over the nation: admiral Geary indeed, who had the channel fleet under his command, made prize of twelve French merchant-men from Port-au-prince; but while he proceeded to the southward, in hopes of falling in with a detached squadron of French and Spanish ships, of which he had received intelligence, near fifty sail of outward-bound East and West India-men were taken by the combined fleets of the enemy, and carried into Cadiz: beside the immense value of the merchandise, many of these ships were laden with stores for different settlements; and their loss, with that of near 3000 men taken prisoners on board, so increased public dissatisfaction at the manner in which

the channel fleet was employed, that Geary soon afterwards resigned the command; which was conferred on admiral Darby. The Americans also had their share of naval success in the capture of fourteen valuable ships belonging to the outward-bound Quebec fleet, off the bank of Newfoundland; and these concurrent losses, in their nearer or more remote consequences, affected all classes of people.

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The domestic affairs of this year demand only a short notice. On the ninth of June, the earl of Surrey, afterwards duke of Norfolk, and hereditary lord high marshal of England, renounced the errors of popery before the archbishop of Canterbury; and on the fifteenth of June, the dukes of Cumberland and Gloucester, being reconciled to the king, went to court for the first time since their respective marriages. His majesty, for the purpose of animating his troops, devoted much time to visiting their encampments, and reviewing both the military and naval forces. His absence, and the distractions of public affairs, gave opportunities to the prince of Wales, of which he gladly availed himself, to escape from a life of restraint, now becoming peculiarly irksome; and the acquaintances which he formed at this period, with young, but more experienced noblemen, acted with injurious effect upon his future character. On the twenty-second of September, her majesty was safely delivered of prince Alfred, whose death took place August 20, 1782: on the first of November, prince Frederic was raised by brevet to the rank of colonel in the British army; and next month set out to travel on the continent, accompanied by colonel Grenville. Royal attention was at this time much engaged by the first development of a plan for Sunday-schools; and when Mr. Raikes of Gloucester was soon afterwards at Windsor, the queen sent for him to the Lodge, and honored him with a long audience, in which he explained his whole system: at the conclusion, her majesty graciously observed, 'that she envied those who had the power of doing good by thus personally promoting the welfare of

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society; a pleasure, from which by her station she was debarred.' She not only sanctioned the benevolent plan of Mr. Raikes, but was throughout life an active encourager of the various institutions in and about Windsor for the instruction and amelioration of the lower classes.

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GEORGE III. (CONTINUED.)—1780.

Meeting of the new parliament—Mr. Cornwall elected speaker—King's speech—Fox's attack on lord Sandwich—Lord North's reply—Rupture with Holland—Notice of it in the session of 1781—Associations appoint delegates—Mr. Burke brings forward the rejected bills of last session—Mr. Pitt's first speech in the house of commons—Other popular efforts—Altered principles of whigs and tories—Supplies, &c.—Other popular subjects discussed in the house—Mr. Sheridan's first speech—System of associations and delegates approved—Evils in the marriage act corrected—Debates on it—Different opinions of Fox and Burke on the subject—Fox's motion respecting the war—Pitt's speech, and defence of his father's principles—Committees on East Indian affairs—Temporary bill continuing the company's monopoly—End of the session, &c.—East Indian affairs in the Deccan from 1778 to 1786—Attack on Jersey—Gibraltar relieved—Attacked by the Spaniards—Attack on Minorca—Combined fleets in the English channel—Naval action with the Dutch—Commodore Johnstone attacked by de Suffrein—Capture of St. Eustace—Confiscation of property—Farther operations of the fleets in the West Indies—State of affairs in America—Arnold's expedition to Virginia—State of the American army, &c.—Washington's resources—Lord Cornwallis's Virginian campaign—Large naval force despatched from France under de Grasse—Siege of Cornwallis in Yorktown—His surrender to Washington—Reflections on the events of the campaign.

THE new parliament met on the thirty-first of October; when it was soon found that returns were sufficiently favorable to the administration. The first debate was occasioned by the election of a speaker; for the hostility shewn to ministers by sir Fletcher Norton, during last session, precluded him from the hope of nomination by them: indeed lord George Germaine, after lamenting that the declining health of the late speaker

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of new
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incapacitated him for so laborious a situation, proposed William Wolfran Cornewall to fill the chair. Sir Fletcher replied to this insincere condolence, that his health was perfectly re-established; and complained of unkind treatment from those, for whose sake he had retained so arduous an office, during two sessions, at the hazard of his life. Opposition members, insisting that he was sacrificed to ministerial and royal resentment, divided the house on his re-election; but were left in a minority of 134 to 203: nor can there be a doubt that sir Fletcher's exhortation in his memorable speech to the king, relative to an economical expenditure of public money, though it met with approbation in the country at large, was the chief cause of his exclusion from office.¹ The king's sentiments, in his speech, regarding the American contest and interference of the house of Bourbon, remained unchanged; and he augured the happiest results from our late successes in Georgia and Carolina. The motion for the address excited warm opposition to a continuance of the contest; but the courtiers, particularly lord George Germaine, still affected to believe that the enemy would be speedily reduced to submission: ministers also obtained support from many members originally opposed to this war, whose spirit became roused as soon as the rebellious colonists were joined by our ancient foes, the French and Spanish courts.² Their opponents, after reviewing the events of the last campaign, insisted, that although the victories gained were most honorable to our forces, they did not advance the professed object of the war: ministers had often predicted that certain successful operations would bring the contest to a termination; but as often as these predictions were made, they were falsified. Mr. Fox refused to acknowledge the blessings which the nation was said to have enjoyed under his majesty's government; and asked, 'how long shall the sacred shield of majesty be interposed for the protection of a weak

¹ 'Lord North,' says sir N. Wraxall, 'having tried the ground at St. James's, found his majesty determined on this point.'—Hist. Mem. vol. i p. 360.

² On this subject, see in the Appendix a letter from sir Hor. Mann to his mother, selected from my collection of autographic papers.

administration?' He acknowledged the sovereign's personal virtues; but declared that his whole reign had been one continued series of disgrace and calamity: he also descanted with great severity on the manner of dissolving the late parliament; and compared the famous vote respecting the influence of the crown, to the death-bed confessions and mock penitence of other abandoned profligates, who in their last moments admonish others to avoid courses which may lead them to an untimely end.

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Carrying on his accusatorial functions, he gave notice, that, after the holidays, he would move; first, that the earl of Sandwich be dismissed; and, next, that he be brought to condign punishment: he would found these motions on two distinct causes; for advising his majesty to promote sir Hugh Palliser to the government of Greenwich-hospital, and for shameful neglect of our navy. On the fourth of December, the day fixed for taking the navy estimates into consideration, the subject of sir Hugh's appointment was introduced; on which occasion lord North displayed one of his greatest oratorical excellences, a readiness of reply: the appointment, he said, was not the act of lord Sandwich alone, but of the other ministers in conjunction with him: Mr. Fox's principal objection to the nomination was, that the court-martial on admiral Keppel had imputed unworthy motives to his accuser: in this it had exceeded its jurisdiction, sitting on Keppel, not on Palliser, whom they did not hear in his own defence. The second objection was, that sir Hugh had been barely acquitted: but this interpretation was confuted by the sentence itself, which declared that his conduct on the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth of July was so far from being reprehensible, that in many parts it appeared exemplary and meritorious: now, exemplary conduct meant such as was fit for imitation; and that which was fit for imitation was surely an object of requital and reward. On the sixth of December the recess took place.

For some time a latent hostility had existed between

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this country and Holland; for ever since the commencement of the American contest, the Dutch had shown a partiality to the republicans, even beyond what might have been expected from the avidity of a mercantile people. Frequent memorials and remonstrances had passed on both sides; and the breach gradually expanded, until it was found that the city of Amsterdam was about to enter into a commercial treaty with the revolted provinces: all doubt indeed on this subject was removed by the capture of an American packet, on board of which was Mr. Laurens, late president of congress, who had been empowered by that body to conclude the treaty. His papers, thrown overboard in the moment of danger, were recovered, and submitted to the inspection of the British cabinet; when Laurens himself was committed to the Tower, on his refusal to answer interrogatories: a spirited remonstrance was then made to the States of Holland, requiring a disavowal of the transaction, as well as the punishment of their pensionary, Van Berkel, and his accomplices in the French faction, which was driving the nation to espouse an uncertain cause against an old and powerful ally. As this memorial produced no redress, sir Joseph Yorke presented another in terms still more cogent and definitive; which also failing in effect, a royal manifesto was issued on the twentieth of December, declaring hostilities against the States, and exhibiting a clear exposition of his majesty's motives.

When parliament re-assembled in January, 1781, it was announced, that letters of marque and reprisal had been issued against the States-General and their subjects; and the various charges against them were summed up by lord North in his speech on that occasion. His lordship lamented the necessity of war with Holland; but it appeared to him an unavoidable measure: he confessed that the situation of this country was truly alarming, though the public prospects were less gloomy than some gentlemen thought proper to represent them. Our difficulties were great, but he trusted not insuperable: he was neither desirous of

concealing their magnitude, nor afraid to meet them; for the force of this nation, when fully exerted, was equal to the contest; and the only means of obtaining a just and honorable peace was to show ourselves capable of carrying on the contest with vigor.

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Opposition exulted at the declaration of war against Holland in the depressed state of our navy, as setting the seal to lord North's political embarrassments, and tending to increase the monarch's unpopularity: yet greater efforts never were made to avoid a rupture, than those of the British cabinet. Sir Joseph Yorke, whose long residence at the Hague gave him great advantages, exhausted all the arts of diplomacy, to stem the current now settling in favor of French and American politics; while the stadtholder, and a large portion of the people, were anxious to preserve those pacific ties between the two countries, which had continued unbroken since the profligate reign of Charles II.; but the prince of Orange had lost that public respect which his high office was calculated to excite; and the nation, immersed in narrow speculations of commercial profit, displayed no spark of that high spirit, which once electrified all Europe. The pensionary Van Berkel, instigated by the northern states, and acting under the influence of Maurepas and Vergennes, now drove his countrymen to a contest with Great Britain, as president Madison, in 1812, commenced hostilities with us at the suggestion of Napoleon: both wars arose principally from the same cause; the apparently desperate condition of England, offering a favorable opportunity to other powers for annihilating, or at least reducing, her maritime superiority.

Notwithstanding the destructive consequences of political frenzy, as exemplified by the scenes which occurred last year in London, the associations formed in various parts of the kingdom were still employed in exciting opposition, by inflammatory resolutions, not only against fancied invasions of public rights, but against the license supposed to be now granted to military authority. The danger of these meetings was much increased by a new and unconstitutional mea-

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sure of appointing delegates to transact their business in the capital, and to promote the object of their petitions. Mr. Burke received from many of such bodies complimentary addresses for his efforts in the cause of reform; and, in compliance with their requests, he again brought forward the rejected bills of last session, introducing his motion by reading the famous resolutions regarding the increased influence of the crown, the power of parliament to correct abuses in the civil list, and the duty of the commons to afford the redress demanded by petitions of the people: he considered these bills as a valuable legacy from the late parliament, and an atonement for its previous criminal servility: they were the result of long and deliberate debate; and he trusted the new parliament would make it a point of duty to carry the wishes of the people into effect. He then described the fate of his former bills, and lamented the versatility through which his labors had been lost to the country: he defended himself against all imputations on the revival of an unsuccessful proposition; and vindicated his plan, as no less useful to the king than to the people. After again adverting in high terms of praise to the system adopted in France by Neckar, he implored the house not to treat his proposition with respect at the outset, for the purpose of putting it to a lingering death; and he urged lord North, if he meant to deal the blow, to save the time of the house, and prevent much public anxiety and disappointment, by settling the matter at once, and becoming, for one day at least, a decisive minister. Four able speeches were expended by Mr. Burke on this measure, but all in vain. Much of his illustration and reasoning was new; and his reply, on a subject seemingly exhausted, so brilliant, that the commendations given to his industry, eloquence, and wit, even on the ministerial side of the house, were unprecedented: it became a common remark, that he was the only man in the country capable of forming and effecting an able and systematic plan of reform.

In support of this measure, Mr. Pitt made his first

speech in parliament. His rising on the occasion was almost accidental; for while lord Nugent was speaking against the bill, Mr. Byng, member for Middlesex, asked him whether he intended to address the house: when, after some hesitation, he determined to remain silent. However, at the conclusion of lord Nugent's speech, Mr. Byng called out his name: the call was echoed by the house; and Mr. Pitt, perceiving that he was expected to speak, rose up for that purpose. Immediately all were fixed in mute attention; the genius of Chatham was recollected; intense curiosity was excited, to ascertain how great a portion of it had descended on his son; and never, perhaps, were expectations more completely answered, than when the youthful orator, standing up amidst a circle of the most skilful and experienced statesmen, delivered himself in favor of the bill, with such facility and animation, with a voice and language so harmonious and energetic, with so much of his father's fire, combined with closer reasoning and clearer arrangement,—that he extorted unqualified praise from both parties.

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Mr. Pitt's
first speech
in parliament.

Several other popular measures, proposed in the last session, were now revived; as the bill against contractors and revenue officers, and that for imposing a tax on places and pensions: but all met with a similar fate. In this struggle between government and the people, it was remarked, that the principles on which the distinctions of whig and tory had been founded, appeared to be lost, and the parties possessing them to have changed sides; for the sentiments of the latter in the two preceding reigns were utterly repugnant to a corrupt influence of the crown over the two houses. If it be said that the body of the whigs were at this time as clamorous against the power of parliament as they once were against the power of the crown, and that the tories became as yielding to the influence acquired by the crown as formerly to the claims of prerogative, it may be answered, that still the political principles, to which each party attached itself, were very different from those which divided their forefathers.³

³ See Lord North's Administration, p. 398.

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The public service of this year demanded the sum of £22,458,337; to provide for which, beside some extraordinary aid from the East India company and the Bank, with £480,000 from a lottery, £12,000,000 were borrowed on a new plan; while it seemed as if the continuance of the war served only to increase the ability of the nation to maintain it: to lessen the immediate weight of interest, the minister added a great load to the funded debt. Subscribers to the loan, for every £100, obtained £150 in annuities, after the rate of three per cent.; and an additional annuity of £25 at four per cent., to be continued till the annuity should be redeemed: so the present year added £18,000,000 to the three per cent. stock, and £3,000,000 to the four per cent.

The interest on this loan amounted to £660,000; to pay which most of the excise duties were increased by an addition of five per cent.: a farther duty was laid also on the importation of tobacco and sugar. Several regulations were made in the duty on paper; and an additional stamp was laid on sheet almanacs; from the produce of which £500 per annum was granted to each of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, in lieu of a sum formerly paid by the Stationers' company for the privilege of printing them. A vote of credit for a million completed the financial arrangements.

The sudden rise in the value of scrip to more than ten per cent. above the original purchase, through which immense fortunes were made by several of lord North's friends and adherents,⁴ produced many serious imputations and motions against the minister. Mr. Fox proposed that the lists of subscribers and proposers should be laid before the house; but his lordship would not consent to the application of that test: cautiously avoiding a detailed answer to Mr. Fox, he declared generally that he had made the best bargain in his power; and this conduct, injurious as it was both to the financial and political interests of the country, was defended and sanctioned by a corrupt house. Nor were these the sole attempts made by

⁴ His favorite contractor, Mr. Atkinson, made the immediate profit of £330,000.

opposition to gain popularity from discussion of questions interesting to the public. The interference of the military in the late riots was introduced to notice by Mr. Sheridan, whose splendid talents were first exhibited in parliament this session. He delivered a severe philippic against administration, adorned with glowing language, and abounding in pointed invectives: but after a long debate, in which the conduct of government, in the suppression of the tumult, and in the indictment of lord George Gordon, was strenuously defended, all motions on this subject were negatived.

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Mr. Sheridan's first
speech in
parliament.

The principle and legality of associations, particularly the dangerous system of delegates, had before engaged attention; and had been stigmatised by Mr. Adam, as spreading baneful effects over the country, and affording encouragement to its enemies: they now came more fully into discussion, when a petition for reform, signed by thirty-two of these mock representatives, was offered to the house by Mr. Duncombe on the second of April; and a motion was afterwards made by sir George Savile for referring it to a committee: this was rejected by a majority of 212 to 135, after the contents of the petition, and the unconstitutional character of the system of delegates had been severely reprobated.

The re-election of sir Hugh Palliser to a seat in parliament furnished a topic for several motions; and the transactions of the courts-martial on him and admiral Keppel were frequently discussed, but without interesting the public.

In this session, an inconvenience, which had arisen from the marriage act of 1751, occasioned a clause in that law to be corrected. It had been enacted that no marriage should be valid, unless solemnised in a church, or some other place where the celebration of nuptials was lawful before the act. A pauper, with a large family, who had been married in a chapel erected after that period, was refused a settlement by his parish, on the plea of his not being a married man; and the court of king's bench, though lamenting

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the hardship of the case, was obliged, in conformity with the statute, to justify the recusants. Through ignorance or inadvertency, many married persons were in the same predicament; and great numbers of innocent children were consequently bastardised: lord Beauchamp therefore proposed an act of retrospective operation, which passed unanimously, to render such marriages valid and their issue legitimate. The consideration of this particular clause led many to take a review of the whole act; and Mr. Fox brought forward a bill to repeal it, which was rejected without a division: the motion excited much notice, by drawing out Mr. Burke as its principal opponent; the two friends supporting their respective views with great ability: those of Fox, who considered the inclination of the contracting parties as the sole criterion of proper marriages, were thought to be too general, and savoring of a democratic spirit. Burke contended, that during the minority of parties, the sanction of parents, or of nearest relations, was requisite in so important a case: 'the marriage act,' he said, 'hit the just mean between a mischievous restraint and that laxity which formerly occasioned so much social disorder.' Dr. Bisset observes,⁵ that 'concerning the control to which natural liberty should be subjected for the sake of general expediency, these two illustrious men manifested, on this occasion, a diversity of opinion which was not much regarded at the time; but, from subsequent proceedings and events, it has been carefully noted by those who have examined the series and system of their respective principles and conduct.'

Late in the session Mr. Fox moved for a committee to take the American war into consideration: intimating his intention to propose a resolution for concluding peace with those whom it was now impossible to subdue: this motion was a kind of test to new members; and most of the speeches, in the long debate which ensued, contained some general principles or professions of political faith. In answer to certain observations reflecting on lord Chatham, whose opi-

⁵ History of the Reign of George III., vol. iii. p. 262.

nions were stated to have been favorable to the principle of those measures which had given rise to the war with our colonies, Mr. Pitt felt it necessary to rise and vindicate his father. It was at a late hour; the house was fatigued; and the question loudly called for: but the moment it was perceived that he was about to speak, all noise and impatience ceased; and he was heard with that silent attention which the recollection of his previous display of talent could not fail to command.

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Mr. Pitt's
defence of
his father.

He declared that the noble person, whose name had been so often mentioned in the course of the debate, heartily reprobated the American war in its principle, its progress, and its ultimate objects; and that he never gave a vote or opinion opposed to those sentiments: this was well known to those who had acted with him; and there were living witnesses and other innumerable circumstances to confirm it. The only sentiment expressed by lord Chatham, from which a contrary inference could be deduced, was, that the British legislature had a right to impose on the colonists duties for the regulation of commerce; duties incidental to the extension of trade, for the mutual benefit of both countries; but not a single tax or duty of any kind for the purpose of raising a revenue in America to be remitted home, and to be disposed of by the British parliament: this however was only a speculative opinion, totally distinct from those doctrines and measures from which the war originated.

After such an exposition of his father's sentiments, Mr. Pitt took this opportunity of stating his own. 'In whatever point of view he considered the American war, it confirmed him in the opinions which he had early formed concerning its origin and tendency: it was conceived in injustice; it was brought forth and nurtured in folly; its footsteps were marked with blood, persecution, and devastation: its mischiefs, however, recoiled on this unhappy country, which became drained of its vital resources in men and treasure: and what had the British nation received in return? nothing but a series of ineffective victories or severe

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defeats; victories, celebrated only by a temporary triumph over our brethren, whom we were attempting to trample down and destroy; which filled the land with mourning for the loss of dear and valuable relations, slain in vain attempts to enforce unconditional submission, or with narratives of the glorious exertions of men struggling under every difficulty and disadvantage in the sacred cause of liberty. Where was the Englishman, who, on reading the accounts of these sanguinary and well-fought battles, could refrain from lamenting the loss of so much British blood spilled in such a contest; or from weeping, on which ever side victory might be declared? Add to this, the melancholy consideration, that to whatever quarter we looked, we could perceive nothing but natural and powerful enemies, or lukewarm and faithless friends, rejoicing in our calamities, and meditating our ultimate downfall.' After dwelling with great energy on the evils already occasioned by the war, he concluded by warning ministers of the still more disastrous and fatal events which must inevitably attend its farther prosecution.

The lord advocate Dundas,⁶ a uniform supporter of the war, and one of the ablest debaters in favor of ministers, replied to Mr. Pitt; and he concluded by observing, with a kind of prophetic eulogy, 'that however unwilling he might be to say in the honorable gentleman's presence, what truth would exact from him if he were absent, he found himself compelled to rejoice in the good fortune of his country which was destined at some future day to derive the most important services from so happy a union of first-rate abilities, high integrity, and persuasive eloquence.' Mr. Fox's motion was lost by a majority of 172 to 99.

East Indian
affairs.

East Indian affairs also came before the house this session. Petitions were presented from various parties in Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, complaining that the supreme court of judicature, established in 1773, had

⁶ He afterwards attached himself strongly to the rising fortunes of Pitt, and was raised by him to the peerage under the title of lord Melville.

greatly exceeded its powers, and unlawfully extended its jurisdiction. A select committee was, at the instance of general Smith, appointed to discuss the affairs of India; the proposer being nominated chairman: to this committee the petitions were referred; and their investigation produced a variety of information, which afterwards extended the objects of inquiry to deliberative and executive, as well as to judicial acts: though all parties agreed on the necessity of caution and delicacy, yet it appeared to them that there were among the company's servants counteracting interests that materially injured the value of Indian possessions. The committee had prepared a long report, when intelligence arrived that affairs were in such a state throughout the Carnatic, as induced the minister to propose a secret committee, including an inquiry into the general management of our Indian territories: this was carried, and Mr. Henry Dundas appointed chairman. Lord North submitted various propositions to the house, as subjects for discussion only: of these, the most important were, 'whether it would be expedient to throw open the trade to India; to grant a monopoly to another company; or to bestow a new charter on the present, and reserve to the public a share of its profits; whether the crown ought to take all territorial possessions and revenues into its own hands, or leave them to the management of a mercantile association?' These topics, amply discussed, turned the attention of members toward Indian affairs, and prepared them for understanding the nature and tendency of such plans as should be afterwards proposed. The minister introduced a temporary bill, continuing the company's monopoly for a limited time, until a more comprehensive and permanent plan should be formed.

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On the eighteenth of July the session closed; when the king thanked his parliament for their exertions during so long and important a period; expressing his satisfaction, that, in the midst of so many and complicated difficulties, the ancient spirit of the British nation was undiminished.

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Military
operations
in India.

The military affairs of India, connected as they had become with the American contest, now call for a brief notice. Deep discontent against the English was rankling in the mind of Hyder Ali: he had once earnestly courted their alliance; doubtless for his own purposes, but on the fair principle, that each contracting party should assist the other against the overwhelming power of the Mahrattas. The conduct, however, of the Anglo-Indian government in the late war, when they saw his very existence so long endangered, without making an effort for his relief, finally disgusted him, and made him place all hope of future aggrandisement on their destruction. The Mahratta counsels also had undergone a complete change: instead of threatening invasion, they sent proposals to Hyder for an alliance against the British: and although the latter, sensible of the advantages of a union with the Mysorean chief, now made overtures for an alliance, with a promise of defending him against any foreign attack, they only tended to increase his irritation: at this crisis intelligence was received of the European war; and the subjects of Louis XVI. with their usual diplomatic activity, opened a communication with Hyder, whom they found very favorably disposed toward them. As soon, however, as hostilities commenced, the British government formed a comprehensive plan for the reduction of all the French possessions in India. Chandernagore, with the factories at Masulipatam and Carical, surrendered without resistance; and Pondicherry, the fortifications of which had been diligently reconstructed, capitulated after a short siege, and was again dismantled. To this conquest Hyder made no opposition: but when the Madras government announced its intention of reducing Mahé, a French fortress on the Malabar coast, through which he obtained military stores, he decidedly objected; insisting, that as the surrounding territory had been conquered by his arms, it was now included in his dominions: the presidency, however, did not consider this argument weighty enough to deter them from attacking a French possession; but

sent an expedition, which soon reduced the place; and Hyder's resentment became more rooted than ever.

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The Madras governors, even when they adopted a more judicious line of policy toward the Mysorean prince, unfortunately shut their eyes to the possibility of its failure: they never expected to become objects of his hostility, though he seems to have made no secret of his vindictive feelings, or to have abstained from proceedings calculated to rouse them from their security: he was, in fact, preparing an expedition on a large scale; and the nabob Mohammed Ali, whose intelligence respecting the designs of the native powers was generally accurate, gave notice of the impending storm, and urged the necessity of defensive measures: but his system of policy was no longer in favor with the council, and his predictions were discredited; every thing hostile to Hyder was regarded as the advice of one who had long misled them on the subject; so that the government was wholly unprepared for the tremendous blow.

Early in June, 1780, Hyder Ali quitted Seringapatam, and at the frontiers of his realm took the command of one of the finest armies that had ever been seen in Southern India: it consisted of 30,000 cavalry, 15,000 regular infantry, and 40,000 irregular troops, beside a rocket corps of 2000 men, 100 pieces of artillery, 5000 pioneers, 400 Europeans, and a commissariat, excellently organised, under the direction of a Brahmin, named Poorneah. With this immense force he urged his way, slowly and circumspectly, through the Ghauts, and burst like a mountain torrent into the Carnatic; no care having been taken to guard those defiles on its frontier: a few days afterwards, and before orders had been issued for the movement of a single soldier, dark columns of smoke, mingled with flame, were seen from St. Thomas's Mount, distant nine miles from Madras; the fruits of the earth and the labors of man were reduced to ashes, and a wide circle of desolation was drawn round the city, extending inland more than thirty miles: around Vellore

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he drew a similar circle, whose radius was about thirteen miles; the rest of the country being spared, with a view to its permanent occupation. Notwithstanding this terrible devastation, Hyder was less detested by the natives as a destroyer, than hailed as a deliverer; so oppressive and odious had been the united sovereignty of the company and the nabob: almost every fortress opened its gates at his approach, and the whole country north of the Coleroon, submitted to his sway.

As soon as the first and great alarm had subsided, government began to reflect on the means of resistance: its immediate care was to secure some of the strong places held by the nabob's troops, on whose fidelity no reliance could be placed: Wandewash and one other were thus preserved; the former by the uncommon skill and gallantry of lieutenant Flint, who accomplished in safety a fatiguing march of thirty miles, deviating to unfrequented paths: by a bold stratagem he obtained possession of the fort, the gates of which were shut against him; and the nabob's kelledar was on the point of surrendering it to Hyder: the next object was to call in a strong force of near 3000 men, under colonel Baillie, in the northern Circars; and sir Hector Munro, the commander in chief, undertook to meet them with the main body at Conjeveram, about fifty miles from the capital. Colonel Baillie, in order to reach the place of rendezvous, was obliged to take an inland route; and, being detained ten days by the swelling of the river Cortelaur, was attacked by Hyder Ali's eldest son Tippoo, with a large detachment, whom he repulsed, after a well-fought action of several hours: but the diminution of his numbers added greatly to his distress; while Hyder, under cover of a feigned movement against sir Hector Munro, interposed his whole force between the two British divisions. In this dilemma, it was determined by a council of war at head quarters, to send such a reinforcement under colonel Fletcher and captain Baird,⁷ as might enable colonel Baillie to cross the

⁷ Afterwards sir David Baird.

country, covered though it was with the enemy's detachments. As the security of this party depended on the very difficulties of the way, as well as the silence and secrecy of their march, colonel Fletcher refused an offer of four six-pounders; and set out about nine o'clock at night, each man carrying two days' provision of rice, biscuit, and arrack, for the relief of their suffering friends. Hyder, however, received accurate intelligence respecting all their movements, and despatched a strong corps to cut them off on their march: but the British commander, having a suspicion of his guides, who were actually in the sultan's pay, suddenly changed his route, and, by a circuitous line, through swamps and rice-fields, effected the desired junction with Baillie's corps; which he thus raised to 3700 men. Hyder burst into furious invectives against his officers, and still determined to intercept the united troops: under his own inspection, the most covert and difficult ground in their line of march was occupied and enfiladed with cannon; large bodies of his best infantry were placed in ambuscade on either side; while he himself, with his main army, was posted in readiness to support an attack.

Colonel Baillie first attempted a movement by night, in order to gain ground, and take that advantage which a superiority of discipline would have given him, if then assailed; but, meeting with some obstacles, he determined, contrary to Fletcher's advice, to delay his march till morning: at daylight therefore on the tenth of September, this unfortunate corps silently advanced, in close column, into the very midst of the toils prepared for them. On a sudden, while they were in a narrow defile, a battery of twelve guns poured a destructive shower of grape-shot into their ranks: the English faced about, and another opened on their rear: they had no choice therefore but to advance, when they were met by other batteries; and in less than half an hour, fifty-seven pieces of cannon were brought to bear on every part of their line: at about seven in the morning, the enemy came on by thousands, and every man was engaged; but the grenadiers

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under captain Baird particularly distinguished themselves: attacked on all sides by 25,000 cavalry, thirty regiments of sepoys, Hyder's European corps, and a numerous artillery, this heroic column remained firm and undaunted, facing their foes on every side, and performing their evolutions with as much coolness and precision as if on parade.

The British had only ten pieces of cannon; but these were so well served, that they made terrible havoc among the enemy; and after a contest of three hours, victory began to incline toward our troops; the sultan himself was about to give orders for retreat; and the French officers who commanded his artillery began to draw off their guns; when by accident, some tumbrels, containing ammunition, blew up with two dreadful explosions, in the centre of the British lines: thus their guns were rendered useless, and the fortune of the day was changed; the conquerors being left at the mercy of the vanquished.

Our brave sepoys were cut to pieces after a valiant resistance; but the British commanders rallied their European troops for one desperate effort; and under fire of the enemy's cannon, gained an eminence: in this position they formed a square; and though totally without ammunition, defended themselves against thirteen successive attacks; the soldiers with their bayonets, and the officers with their swords: even when they were borne down by torrents of fresh foes, they disdained to yield, and many continued fighting under the legs of elephants and horses. Our loss in this conflict was 4000 sepoys and 600 Europeans; colonel Fletcher being among the slain: colonel Baillie, with captain Baird, who was severely wounded in four places, several other officers, and 200 Europeans, were made prisoners, and reserved for the horrors of a captivity worse than death. Since much of the slaughter in Hyder's army was imputed to the grenadiers, captain Baird, who commanded them, was chained by the leg to another prisoner.⁸

⁸ He remained three years and a half in imprisonment at Seringapatam; being released in March, 1784.

The first advantage drawn by the sultan from this victory was the reduction of Arcot; while he held in close siege Wandewash, Vellore, and other important bulwarks of the Carnatic. To remedy such disasters produced by the imbecility of our Madras government, sir Eyre Coote, a veteran officer of high reputation, was sent by governor Hastings, and invested with independent powers: he carried with him 560 European troops; and a strong corps of sepoys was prepared to march along the coast as soon as the rainy season would permit: at the same time, Mr. Whitehill, president of Madras, was suspended from his functions, and the funds for the prosecution of the war were placed in the hands of the commander in chief. Sir Eyre, on his arrival, found every thing in a wretched state; the people treacherous; and all resources cut off: his first concern was to send despatches to sir Edward Hughes and general Goddard, urging them to distress as much as possible the possessions of Hyder on the Malabar coast, and to cultivate terms of peace and friendship with the Mahrattas.

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With about 7000 men at his disposal, of which 1700 only were Europeans, the British general eagerly desired to encounter his enemy in the field: what he dreaded was the harassing warfare carried on by Hyder in a country reduced to a state of desolation. When the British army marched, it resembled, in some respects, a caravan preparing to cross the desert; every thing necessary to support life being carried with the troops; and as they advanced in close column, through dreary tracks, clouds of the enemy's cavalry hovered round them: these native warriors, finding that the British soldiers would not waste their ammunition against individuals, rode close up to the ranks, uttering words of fierce defiance, or invitations to single combat. Captain Dallas, an officer of great personal prowess, successfully encountered several chiefs; but in such a mode of fighting the Indians generally had the advantage.

Harassing as was this warfare, still, while the sultan continued to decline a combat, he was obliged to raise

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the siege of every place near which the English directed their march; though their troops became at length so exhausted and destitute, that the commander saw little prospect of relief except in a general action; and this he could scarcely hope to bring on; but Hyder, at length, encouraged by the appearance of a French fleet on his coasts, and a repulse sustained by the British at the pagoda of Chillumbrum, intrenched his army in a strong position near Cuddalore, where he could at once maintain a communication with the sea, and cut off all supplies from his opponents. The post was extremely strong; but on the first of July, sir Eyre Coote skilfully led his troops through a passage formed by the enemy for a different purpose; drew up his men in face of several powerful batteries, as well as a vast body of cavalry; and finally carried all before him. Hyder was struck with consternation at the success of this attack, and burst into the most furious rage: seated on an eminence in the rear, he refused to move from the spot, until a confidential attendant almost by force drew the buskins on his legs, and placed him on a fleet horse, which quickly bore him out of danger.

This victory enabled the British general to relieve Wandewash, which was closely besieged by Tippoo; and after divers marches and countermarches, Hyder took up a position near the village of Polilloor, where colonel Baillie had suffered his defeat: there sir Eyre attacked him, and an action more bloody than decisive ensued; for the British were in all quarters exposed to a severe cross-fire. Mr. Mill asserts that sir Eyre's movements were paralysed by a dispute with sir Hector Munro; and that if Hyder had made a vigorous charge, he might have won the victory: at length however, he yielded the ground on which the battle was fought; and which the English reached over the dead bodies of their yet unburied countrymen, who had fallen in the former action.

The British army acquired neither reputation nor strength by this engagement: but having heard that the fortress of Vellore was reduced to extremity, and

that the sultan was posted at Sholinghur, their general, on the twenty-seventh of September, pushed forward with such vigor that he nearly surprised the Indians before they could form their ranks: having put them to flight, after they had made several brisk charges, and lost near 5000 men, he was enabled to march on Vellore, and raise the siege. While this contest was carried on with various success, intelligence arrived of the quarrel between England and Holland; when Lord Macartney, the new president of Madras,⁹ whose urbanity, moderation, and firmness admirably qualified him for the office, formed a design of reducing Negapatam, the principal Dutch settlement. Finding sir Eyre Coote, who was invested with exclusive power over the troops, averse to this plan, he collected a separate corps of 4000 men; and placing it under sir Hector Munro, endeavored with equal wisdom and calmness to soothe the irritability of the veteran general, heightened as it was by the infirmities of age, and the difficulties of his situation. The enterprise was conducted vigorously and successfully: five lines of redoubts were carried with such intrepidity, that a garrison of 8000 men capitulated in fourteen days; all the other Dutch settlements on the same coast fell into our hands; and Trincomalee, their principal station in Ceylon, was stormed by a detachment of sepoys and artillerymen under sir Edward Hughes.

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The year 1782 was an eventful one. The arrival of the French admiral, de Suffrein, who had been detached from the fleet of the count de Grasse, opened a prospect of crushing the British power: on the fifteenth of February, he bore down, with twelve ships of the line, six frigates, and eight large transports, to attack sir Edward Hughes in the open road of Madras; but on discovering that the British admiral had been reinforced by two line-of-battle ships and the Isis frigate, he stood out to sea; when our commander recaptured five English transports, and took a large French ship, loaded with artillery and stores for Hyder. The efforts of Suffrein to protect his convoy

⁹ He arrived at Fort St. George in June, 1781.

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produced an engagement, which was distinguished only by the gallantry with which five British ships, separated from the rest, repelled an attack of the enemy's fleet.

Another engagement, equally undecisive, occurred on the twelfth of April; but its effect was to make Hyder Ali more desirous of peace, by exhausting his patience; for he saw how delusive were the promises of his French allies. The contest between the two fleets was twice renewed during the year; and on the sixth of July, a victory was nearly gained by the English, when a sudden squall enabled their defeated enemy to retreat: on the sixth of September, sir Edward sailed to the relief of Trincomalee; but, though he arrived too late, he encountered the French squadron, which again owed its safety to flight; when Suffrein broke six of his captains, and sent them to the Mauritius. The fifth and last conflict between these antagonists, occurred the following year, at the siege of Cuddalore, when the English fleet was reduced to a miserable condition by the scurvy: it was fought at a considerable distance; and, like the others, terminated without a capture on either side.

In January, 1782, the French fleet, which arrived on the Coromandel coast, after intercepting several vessels bound to Madras with grain, landed 2000 men at Porto Novo: these were soon joined by a large detachment under Tippoo, who had lately inflicted on the English one of the deepest wounds which they sustained during the war. Colonel Braithwaite, who was stationed with about 2000 troops on the banks of the Coleroon, for the protection of Tanjore, being misled by false information, which his crafty foe contrived to throw in his way, found himself suddenly surrounded by an army ten times as numerous as his own: his little band made a gallant resistance, repelling the most desperate and repeated assaults for the space of twenty-six hours; but a charge by the French troops under general Lally having broken the ranks of the sepoys, the whole were routed, and either killed or forced to surrender: the French officers displayed

that humanity which had distinguished them in these campaigns; and Tippoo himself treated his prisoners with less cruelty than usual.

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But notwithstanding this victory, Hyder had cause for serious alarm; through the indefatigable exertions of Warren Hastings, the Mahrattas had withdrawn from his alliance, and even bound themselves to guarantee the British territory, as it stood at the period of their last treaty; while a strong detachment, sent to besiege Tellicherry, had been beaten and compelled to surrender by a force from Bombay. Strengthened however by his French auxiliaries, he took Cuddalore, and proceeded to besiege the important position of Wandewash; but was driven from that post by sir Eyre Coote, forced to retreat towards Pondicherry, and defeated in a battle with considerable loss at Arnee: the British general then threw supplies into Vellore, and undertook an expedition against Cuddalore, which only failed for want of naval co-operation. Madras was at this time suffering under accumulated evils: the ravages of Hyder Ali had driven crowds from all quarters to seek refuge within its walls, where multitudes were daily perishing: famine raged in all its horrors; and the numbers of dead and dying threatened pestilence as an additional calamity: the bodies of those who expired in the streets or houses were daily collected, and piled in carts, to be buried in large trenches outside the town; and for a considerable time near 1500 a week are said to have perished. Fortunately, the French had no information or conception of this miserable and unprotected state of the presidency, before supplies were received from Bengal and the Circars.

In the mean time, success again attended the British arms on the Malabar coast, whither Tippoo and Lally had hastened with numerous troops to retrieve the Mysorean interests: but colonel Macleod, who had lately taken the command, intrenched himself so strongly at Paniani, that the enemy were repulsed with great loss; and Tippoo, preparing to renew the attack, was recalled by an event involving consequences

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of deeper interest to himself than could have ensued from the most brilliant victory: this was the death of his father, who expired on the seventh of December, 1782, at the age of more than eighty years. The decease of an Indian prince is generally a crisis for the power which he may have reared; for his army almost always becomes disorganised and dispersed under different leaders; while his ministers are forming plots in favor of different competitors for the throne: nor was this danger slight as it regarded the family of Hyder Ali, whose active mind had ever been the grand principle of movement both in the court and in the army; but his profound sagacity had enabled him to choose ministers, who, in the hour of trial, stood faithful to himself and to his house. Having kept the death of their master a profound secret from all but a few confidential persons, and having suppressed an attempt made by Mohammed Ameen to place the second son on his father's throne, they despatched messengers to Tippoo; who instantly suspended his warlike operations, and effected a rapid march across the peninsula: on the second of January, 1783, he made a private entry into the camp; when, after the usual distribution of pay and donatives, he was recognised as commander of the army, and sovereign of Mysore.

Notwithstanding the most studied concealment, the presidency at Madras received early notice of Hyder's death, and urgently pressed their commander in chief to take advantage of that state of disorganisation in the Mysorean government, which was expected to follow: unfortunately, however, the council at Madras was itself in a state of utter insubordination and dissension. General Stuart, who had succeeded sir Eyre Coote in command of the forces, claimed the same dictatorial power, which peculiar circumstances obtained for his predecessor; while lord Macartney naturally required the subordination of military to civil authority: the general, therefore, to vindicate his supposed rights, acted in direct contradiction to instructions issued from the presidency: he first expressed doubts of Hyder's death; then said he would

move in proper time; afterwards declared that his troops were not in a condition to march; and, finally, undertook no movement until sixty days after Hyder's death, and thirty-four after Tippoo's succession had been quietly proclaimed. This state of dissention appeared so injurious to the public service, that the supreme government sent sir Eyre Coote to resume the command, with nearly the same unlimited power as before; though lord Macartney decidedly objected to such an arrangement: but the gallant veteran, overcome by the hardships of his voyage, expired on the twenty-sixth of April, 1783, two days after his arrival at Madras.

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The contest, however, in the Carnatic had assumed a more favorable aspect; for Tippoo, considering Western India as the principal theatre of war, had evacuated Arcot, and withdrawn his troops to that quarter: in consequence, it was determined to attack Cuddalore, where the French had, under the marquis de Bussy, concentrated their main force, assisted by a large body of native infantry. Mutual complaints and recriminations passed on this occasion between the commander in chief and the Madras government; but an assault, which took place on the thirteenth of June, gave the contested position to the English, though with a loss of 1000 men: yet Suffrein, the French admiral, having gained a superiority by sea, and landed a large reinforcement, the enemy prepared for a last effort; from the dangers of which the British were relieved by the intelligence of peace between the two nations: on this, M. Bussy not only suspended offensive operations, but sent orders to his countrymen to withdraw from Tippoo's service: he also proffered his mediation between the contending parties. General Stuart, by a unanimous vote of the committee, was dismissed the company's service; and, having intimated his intention of resisting their authority, was put under arrest, and sent to England.

On the western coast of the peninsula affairs now took a turn favorable to our arms, under general Mathews. By instructions from the presidency of

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Bombay, that officer landed his troops at the point nearest to the important city of Bednore, and began to scale the steepest parts of the Ghauts; disregarding several detachments of the enemy hovering about his flanks and rear. In this manœuvre he experienced a success which he had not dared to anticipate, and Bednore surrendered without a blow; for treason, unknown to himself, worked for him. Sheik Ayâz, who commanded there, and who for his abilities had been raised from an obscure condition by Hyder Ali, was an object of jealousy and hatred to Tippoo, who immediately after his father's death sent an order for his execution: the sheik, however, having intercepted the letter, hastened to the citadel, and effected its delivery to the English.

The sultan, greatly concerned at this loss, which brought the enemy so near to his capital, pushed forward successive detachments against the British rear, and surrounded them with an overwhelming force: meanwhile Mathews, elated with his easy victory, reposed in false security; dispersing his troops among the different fortresses of the country, and allowing his communication with the coast to be intercepted. Tippoo's army was then brought up to the attack under Cossigny, a scientific French engineer; the garrison were driven into the citadel; and after a brave defence, their ammunition being expended and their provisions nearly consumed, capitulated under a promise of safe conduct to the coast. As soon as the sultan obtained admission into Bednore, he proceeded to the treasury; and gave way to rage and dismay, when he found it empty: orders were then given to search the British officers, on whom was found a large sum in money and jewels, which are considered in India as public property. On this discovery, Tippoo considered himself absolved from all stipulations; and the prisoners were cast into irons, and committed to the most rigorous confinement: marching down the coast, he laid siege to Mangalore, which was bravely defended by colonel Campbell fifty-six days, until it was reduced almost to ruins; when news of the peace

separated all the French officers from the service of Tippoo; who was so irritated by the circumstance, that they with difficulty escaped the effects of his resentment. Unable to prosecute the siege alone, he granted an armistice, to extend over the whole coast of Malabar; one condition of which was, that a monthly supply of provisions should be allowed to enter Mangalore: but the spirit of this stipulation was violated; the provisions sent in being of so bad a quality, that the health of the garrison was utterly ruined; while general M'Leod, with ill-timed scrupulosity, declined taking any effective means to introduce a supply of proper food. Colonel Campbell, after bravely defending the place nearly nine months, under the most dreadful privations, was obliged to surrender it on the twenty-sixth of January, 1784; dying very soon afterwards, a victim to the fatigue which he had undergone.

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This unimportant triumph was dearly purchased by Tippoo; while important advantages had been gained by the British in Southern India, where the military talents of colonels Lang and Fullarton were ably directed by Mr. Sullivan, civil resident: the strongest fortresses in the country had been reduced; and the latter officer was preparing to ascend the Ghauts and march on Seringapatam, when he was stopped in his victorious career by orders from the government, and directed to restore his recent conquests. Two English commissioners had been despatched at the sultan's request, to his camp, to treat for peace; and although these envoys, when they discovered his proceedings with regard to Mangalore, sent orders to colonel Fullarton to suspend the process of restoration, yet a treaty was at length concluded; each party retaining its former possessions, and Tippoo releasing such of his prisoners as had survived the hardships of their captivity.

One of the first acts by which this tyrant signalised his reign, was the deportation and forcible conversion to Islamism of 30,000 christians from Portuguese settlements on the coast of Canara. All were circumcised and distributed among the principal garrisons;

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but 'as far as could be ascertained from conjecture,' says colonel Wilks, 'one-third of the number did not survive the first year.' When the army returned to the upper countries, its services were employed in quelling a protracted rebellion of the people who dwelt among the hills and forests of Coorg: it was not long, however, before they were again in revolt; and Tippoo entering Coorg with two columns, drew round the great mass of its population a military circle, which he gradually contracted; sending his troops to beat up the woods, as if they were dislodging game. By these means he enclosed about 70,000 of the inhabitants, who were driven off like cattle to Seringapatam, where they also were honored with the distinction of Islamism: on this auspicious occasion, the name of Tippoo Sultan was substituted in public prayers at the mosques, for that of Shah Allum, the reigning sovereign; he also assumed the regal title of Padishah, and ordered his court to observe all the forms and ceremonies used at Delhi. The narrative of Indian affairs is thus brought down to the period when lord Cornwallis arrived at Calcutta, which formed a new epoch in the British government of that country.

Attack on
Jersey.

In Europe an event occurred, which added a degree of historic interest to the annals of Jersey. Early in January, the baron de Rullecourt invaded that island, with about 700 men; and having found it totally unprepared, marched by night to St. Helier, surprised the guard, and took possession of the market-place; so that the inhabitants at day-break discovered, with no small astonishment, that they were in the hands of an enemy. Major Corbett, the lieutenant-governor, though he was taken in bed, contrived to send intelligence of these events to different regiments quartered in the island: he was then brought, together with the magistrates and principal inhabitants, to the court-house; and the French general knowing the impossibility of retaining his conquest with the small force under his command, produced articles of capitulation, which he required the major instantly to sign; at the same time he declared his intention of setting fire to the town, as

well as the shipping, and of putting the inhabitants to the sword, in case of refusal. The governor at first showed some reluctance; but when the other, laying his watch on the table, allowed him only half an hour for deliberation, he yielded to these menaces; though the king's advocate and the constable, who also were prisoners, both refused to sign the document: Rullecourt then issued a proclamation containing the usual promises and threats on such occasions, produced a commission from his own sovereign appointing him governor of the island, and ordered the shops to be reopened in the ordinary course of business.

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The orders, however, which had been despatched in the name of major Corbett to the different corps, failed to produce the effect intended by the French commander; for the officers, understanding that the lieutenant-governor was a prisoner, did not consider them binding: accordingly, they advanced in conjunction with the island militia; and under the conduct of major Pierson of the ninety-fifth regiment, assembled on two heights to the north and south of the town: Elizabeth castle, though it had been summoned to surrender on the prescribed terms, was preserved by the good conduct of captains Aylward and Mulcaster, who retired thither on the first alarm, and refused to admit any orders from the lieutenant-governor in his present circumstances. Rullecourt now despatched an officer, with a flag, to major Pierson, for the purpose of effecting a capitulation: not even a truce, however, was allowed; and the major returned for answer—that if the French did not surrender in half an hour, he would attack them. All hope of negotiation therefore being ended, Rullecourt prepared to defend his conquest by acts more worthy of a soldier; while Pierson, leaving a party of militia to keep up a fire on the French from the southern height, marched with his forces from that on the northern side, called Gal-lows-hill, directly on the town; but just as he turned, at the head of a column, into the market-place, where the main body of the enemy was posted, he received a fatal shot, and fell in the act of cheering his men. For

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a moment the French had the advantage; but the British troops soon rallied, and drove their adversaries before them. Rullecourt for a time continued the combat, retaining near him the lieutenant-governor, whom he held constantly by the arm; but having fallen with a mortal wound, his troops were repulsed on all sides, and at length surrendered at discretion: so terminated this second attempt on Jersey, which cost many brave men their lives, and major Corbett his honor; for he was shortly afterwards brought before a court-martial, and dismissed the service. A splendid monument, was subsequently erected by the states, in the town church, to the memory of major Pierson.

Gibraltar
attacked
by the
Spaniards.

The blockade of Gibraltar still continued; and the garrison, but especially the inhabitants, began again to feel severe distress: the coarsest food was sold at an enormous price, and fuel could scarcely be obtained for the most indispensable purposes; yet all submitted to these distressing privations with extraordinary cheerfulness: in such circumstances, the interest and honor of Great Britain required that one of the first efforts of the campaign should be the relief of this important place; accordingly a fleet of twenty-eight line-of-battle ships was fitted out early in the year, under admiral Darby. The enemy boasted that they would defeat the execution of this design, from a hope of preventing the attempt; but the British admiral set sail with a convoy of ninety-seven victuallers, as well as two fleets of merchantmen; and this, while a French armament of twenty-six ships was lying in Brest harbor, and a still larger Spanish fleet was cruising in the bay of Cadiz: France, however, was more intent on her own designs against the British in America, as well as in the East and West Indies, than on seconding the views of Spain regarding Gibraltar; so instead of seeking a junction with the Spanish admiral, she despatched her grand fleet, under count de Grasse, to the West Indies, and a strong squadron, under Suffrein, to the East. When admiral Darby arrived off Cadiz, on the twelfth of April, he saw the enemy at anchor,

evidently indisposed to offer any opposition; he therefore sent forward his convoy under cover of a few ships of war; and cruised off the straits, in hopes of enticing them to an engagement: the victuallers got safely into harbor, notwithstanding some annoyance from the enemy's gun-boats; and Gibraltar was relieved. The Spaniards having, after an experiment of twenty months, discovered the inefficacy of a blockade, now resolved to try the effects of a bombardment: raising several stupendous batteries, they mounted them with 170 guns of the weightiest metal, and with eighty mortars of the largest dimensions; these disgorged torrents of fire against Elliot's brave garrison, who returned it with a still heavier discharge: it seemed as if not only the works, but the rock itself must have been overwhelmed; all distinction of parts being lost in flame and smoke. This terrible cannonade continued day and night for three weeks, in every twenty-four hours of which it was calculated that fifty tons of gunpowder were consumed, and nearly 5000 shot and shells passed through the town: it then slackened; but was not intermitted during one whole day for upwards of twelve months: though the fatigues of the garrison were extreme, the loss of men was less than could have been expected; for during the first ten weeks the whole number of killed and wounded hardly exceeded 300; and very little damage was done to the fortifications, though the town presented a mass of ruins. Such of the inhabitants as were not buried under their houses, or torn to pieces by the shells, fled to the remotest parts of the rock; but destruction followed them in places which had hitherto been deemed secure: no scene could be more deplorable; mothers and children, clasped in each other's arms, were torn to pieces, and the shattered fragments of their limbs dispersed; while ladies, of the highest classes and most delicate frames, deemed themselves happy, when admitted to a few hours' repose in the casemates, amid the noise of a crowded soldiery and the groans of wounded men. At the first onset, general Elliot returned against the assailants a tremendous fire; but

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foreseeing the difficulty of procuring supplies, he soon became more sparing in the expenditure of ammunition; and received, with comparative indifference, the furious volleys of his opponents: by the latter end of November, the besiegers had brought their works to that state of perfection which they intended; having employed on them the most skilful engineers of France and Spain: both nations were filled with sanguine hopes of success, and all Europe was in anxious suspense concerning the fate of the garrison; when a sally was projected and executed, which in about two hours destroyed those stupendous works, that had required so much time, and skill, and labor to construct. A body of 2000 picked men, under brigadier-general Ross, marching out in the darkness of night on the twenty-seventh of November, made a simultaneous attack on the whole front of the Spanish lines: with such silence did they advance, that the enemy had no suspicion of their approach, until a general assault gave notice of their presence: the Spaniards then fled on all sides; while the pioneers and artillerymen spread their fire with such rapidity, that in a little time every thing combustible was in flames; the mortars and cannon were spiked; their beds, platforms, and carriages were destroyed; and the magazines exploded one after another during the conflagration: before day-break the detachment which accomplished all this destruction returned to the garrison, with scarcely any loss; but the besiegers, though disconcerted by so unexpected a blow, very soon recovered from their alarm; and with a determination, peculiar to their country, resolved to persevere in the siege.

Attack on
Minorca.

Admiral Darby, having endeavored in vain to draw the enemy to an engagement by sea, returned to protect the channel; while M. de Guichen, understanding that the British fleet no longer intervened between Brest and Cadiz, sailed with eighteen ships of the line to join the Spanish admiral, and support him in a meditated attack on Minorca; the conquest of which, next to that of Gibraltar, was the principal object of Spanish ambition: a combined force of 16,000 men,

commanded by the duc de Crillon, with a suitable train of artillery, effected a landing, and commenced the siege of St. Phillip's castle; but their success was not commensurate with their expectations; and the year was spent in unsuccessful efforts.

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After convoying this armament to Minorca, the united fleets, amounting to seventy sail, of which fifty were of the line, advanced toward the British coasts, and for some time rode triumphant in the channel. Admiral Darby prudently retired with his squadron into Torbay, waiting an attack; but a difference of opinion between the French and Spanish commanders led to a council of war, which overruled the proposition of assailing the British ships in harbor: after some unavailing attempts to intercept our homeward-bound traders, this mighty armament was compelled in September, by the wretched state of its ships and crews, to return to port without effecting any exploit worthy of notice.

French and
Spanish
fleets in the
English
channel.

The year however did not pass away without some naval actions honorable to the British name. In the beginning of August, the Dutch admiral Zoutman, with ten ships of the line, eight large frigates, and five sloops, encountered a British squadron, consisting of six line-of-battle ships and several frigates under admiral Parker, with a convoy from the north seas: an action immediately took place off the Dogger-bank; when both parties, eager for a close engagement, advanced in gloomy silence, without firing a gun, until they were within pistol-shot. More determined valor was perhaps never shown than in this engagement: for three hours and forty minutes did these hostile squadrons fight without intermission, ranged abreast of each other; and the slaughter on each side was terrible, the English losing about 500, and the enemy 1200 in killed and wounded: when they were both disabled, they lay to for some time, repairing damages; after which, the Dutch admiral bore away unopposed for the Texel, with his ships terribly shattered; one of them sinking, the night after the engagement, with all her wounded on board; while the rest with diffi-

Naval ac-
tion with
the Dutch.

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culty gained the harbor: thus their voyage to the Baltic was abandoned, all means of procuring naval stores were cut off, and their valuable carrying-trade was for this year annihilated. Though the result of the action was so glorious to the British flag, the admiralty was severely and justly blamed for not furnishing admiral Parker with a sufficient force; while there were as many ships lying idle in our ports as would have enabled him to capture the whole Dutch armament: although this brave man, on his return to the Nore, received the honor of a royal visit, no acts of civility or condescension could induce him to retain his command; so great was his indignation at the insufficiency and bad condition of his fleet.

Commodore Johnstone was appointed to the command of a squadron destined to annoy the Dutch in another quarter, by attacking their valuable settlement at the Cape of Good Hope: the court of Versailles, however, at the solicitation of their ally, despatched a superior force to counteract this design, under M. de Suffrein; who finding the British in the neutral port of Praya, in the island of St. Jago, proceeded to attack them. He advanced as if to certain victory, but was soon taught his mistake: though the British force was thrown into some confusion at the first onset, the native valor of our seamen soon displayed itself; and several outward-bound Indiamen, who were under convoy, joining in the engagement, the French were beaten off: the commodore, soon afterwards, meeting with five Dutch East Indiamen richly laden, took four, and burned the other; but perceiving that he could not compass the original object of his expedition, he returned to England with his prizes.

Capture
of St.
Eustace.

The Dutch, however, met with severe punishment for their perfidious conduct at the hands of Rodney; for ministers despatched early intelligence of hostilities to that officer; who, in conjunction with general Vaughan, deceived the French commanders by feigning a design on Martinique, and then blockaded the island of St. Eustace with his whole fleet. This place is a kind of natural fortification; and having a free port, long the

seat of an extensive commerce, had heaped up immense stores and wealth¹⁰ during the season of warfare among its neighbors; but it was wholly unprepared to make effectual resistance to the force which now demanded its immediate surrender: M. de Graaf, the governor, therefore returned for answer, that, as he was utterly incapable of defence, he must of necessity capitulate, relying solely on the known clemency of British commanders. The enormous wealth accumulated on this barren spot was indiscriminately seized and confiscated; in addition to which booty, above 150 rich merchantmen, a Dutch frigate of thirty-eight guns, and five small vessels, were taken, being deceived by the Dutch colors, which had been kept flying on the island: the adjacent isles of St. Martin and Saba were also reduced; and thirty large ships, valued at £500,000, which had sailed for Holland, were overtaken and captured: the Dutch West India company, the Amsterdam merchants, and many Americans, were great losers by this confiscation of property; nor did the British merchants suffer in a much less degree; for, confiding in its neutrality, they had accumulated there large quantities of West Indian produce and European goods: these stated the hardship of their case to admiral Rodney and general Vaughan; but received for answer, that 'the island, with every thing contained in it, was Dutch; and as Dutch it should be treated:' such apparent severity drew on the conquerors many pointed censures; and suits at law were subsequently instituted in the British courts, by which large sums were recovered from the admiral: if, however, he erred against strict legal right, he may be excused on the plea, that he considered himself justified in confiscating the property of British subjects, who, for their own private gain, had sacrificed the interest of their country. This island had long been the chief magazine, whence the Ameri-

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¹⁰ 'All the magazines,' says the admiral, 'are filled, and even the beach covered with tobacco and sugar.'—'The capture is immense, and amounts to more than I can venture to say. All is secured for the king, to be at his royal disposal.'—'I speak within bounds, when I say it is more than £2,000,000 sterling.'—*Life of Rodney*, vol. ii.

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cans had procured supplies; and in that commerce British merchants had largely participated.¹¹

The captured treasure having been despatched to England with a convoy under admiral Hotham, twenty-five of the ships were taken by a French squadron under la Motte Piquet; and thus the wealth of St. Eustace still continued to enrich our enemies: the island itself was also surrendered toward the end of the year, in a very discreditable way, by colonel Cockburn: moreover while Rodney was at this place, and his fleet weakened by the large detachment sent with the booty to England, the French were quietly executing a well planned scheme, which secured to them a naval superiority on the American coast, to the ruin of British interests in the United States.

Twenty-five ships of the line and one of fifty guns, under de Grasse and Suffrein, sailed from Brest on the twenty-second of March, with 6000 land forces on board, and a convoy of nearly 300 merchant vessels: twenty-one of these ships, after Suffrein had separated from them and sailed to the East Indian seas, proceeded to Martinique; and as their junction with the force already there would give them a great superiority over the British, Rodney despatched sir Samuel Hood with seventeen ships of the line to intercept them off Fort Royal bay: a partial engagement in consequence took place; but although the enemy had by reinforcements a majority of six, they kept at a great distance; and some of the English ships, pressing into closer action, received considerable damage. The French commanders, having failed in an attack on St. Lucie, now undertook the reduction of Tobago;

¹¹ 'The island having been taken at the first summons,' says Rodney's biographer, 'the merchants had no time to destroy or secrete their books; on inspection of which, it came out, that certain London and Bermudian merchants had been in the habit of furnishing the American privateers with warlike stores; and, as a cloak to their clandestine commerce, they fixed on a cipher, part of which consisted in calling cannon-balls fruit, and gunpowder grain.'—'My happiness,' says the admiral in a despatch, 'is in having been the instrument of my country to bring this nest of villains to condign punishment. They deserve scourging, and they shall be scourged.'—'The guilty American merchants,' says he again, 'and the equally guilty Bermudian and British, though compelled to retire, will be permitted to take with them their personal effects.'—*Life of Rodney*, vol. ii. pp. 12, 13. 45, &c.

when Rodney, having completed his repairs, came with his whole fleet in sight of their squadron: but though they no longer showed their usual disposition to avoid an engagement, and he had the advantage of the wind, he did not think it prudent to run the risk: the island was nobly defended, and only reduced by the savage mode of warfare adopted by de Bouillé, who set fire to four plantations daily until the governor capitulated: this conquest terminated all naval operations for the year in the West Indies: the French, being still farther augmented by five sail of the line at Hispaniola, proceeded to the Chesapeake; while Rodney returned to England on account of his health, leaving sir Samuel Hood in command of the fleet.

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Some important transactions had taken place since the last campaign in America. The spirit of disaffection in the southern provinces, which had been checked by the victory at Camden, revived through the defeat of major Ferguson: but lord Cornwallis, having obtained from Virginia, at the close of the year 1780, a reinforcement of 2600 men under general Leslie, still pursued his intention of penetrating into North Carolina; at the same time, sir Henry Clinton, with a desire of making a diversion in his favor, and establishing a place of retreat, if necessary, despatched general Arnold, at the head of 1800 men, to occupy Portsmouth on Elizabeth river: he also instructed him to make incursions into Virginia, to strike at the enemy's magazines, and to conciliate the inhabitants by proclamations: with a laudable prudence, however, he associated with him two experienced officers, lieutenant-colonels Dundas and Simcoe; while lord Cornwallis had power to supersede him, if circumstances should render it necessary: but Arnold, whose bravery and skill were indisputable, proceeded with a corps of 1000 men up James river; and having destroyed a valuable cannon foundery, military barracks, a large quantity of stores, and many vessels richly laden, succeeded in establishing the required post at Portsmouth.

Arnold's
expedition
to Virginia.

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The havoc made by Arnold, and apprehensions of a design to fix a permanent post in Virginia, induced Washington to send thither the marquis de la Fayette, with 1200 troops, as well as to urge the French in Rhode Island to co-operate with him in his endeavors to capture the American renegado: with this view their fleet, having 1500 additional men on board, set sail under the command of M. d'Estouches, who had previously sent a naval force to the Chesapeake, which took or destroyed ten British vessels, and captured the *Romulus*, a forty-four gun ship; but on the tenth of March, admiral Arbuthnot sailed from Gardiner's-bay in pursuit, and on the sixteenth of the same month engaged them off the capes of Virginia. The British had a small superiority in guns, and the French in men: the contest ended without the loss of a ship on either side; but the former effected their object by frustrating the scheme of their opponents, who returned to Rhode Island; and Arnold was preserved from the imminent danger of falling into the hands of his exasperated countrymen. On the twenty-fifth of March, a convoy arrived in the Chesapeake from New York with major-general Philips and about 2000 men: this distinguished officer, having formed a junction with Arnold, defeated the American militia, and carried every thing before him; but his country was soon deprived of his eminent services by death.

The plan of Arnold's expedition, as well as its success, was principally owing to the discontent prevailing in the American army, of which our commander had received intelligence. The misery of the troops, for want of pay, clothing, and even food, was extreme: congress was unable to afford the requisite supplies; and the troops proceeded from murmurs to open complaint, and finally to revolt, though not to desertion: the term of enlistment in several corps expired with the year; and the whole Pennsylvanian line paraded under arms without their officers, seized six field pieces, supplied themselves with ammunition, and declared their resolution to proceed and demand justice of congress. General Wayne attempted, without suc-

cess, to arrest the progress of these revolvers; but they assured him that they were as attached as ever to the cause which they had embraced; and if the English should dare to come out of New York, they were ready, under him, to face them in the field: to prove the truth of these assertions, they gave up to him several British messengers, who had been sent by sir Henry Clinton for the purpose of enticing them to desert their colors. All these difficulties and dangers arose from the want of a proper executive power in the state; which might have levied general taxes, and applied their produce to legitimate purposes: the mind of Washington, however, was equal to the emergency: with half his army, as usual, disbanded on the first of January, with the main body of the British in New York, and the Hudson open to their ships, he contrived to suppress the mutiny; to check any extensive operations of his opponents; to carry on a large correspondence with his detached officers, with numerous influential persons, and with the state governments: whence he obtained funds to pay his soldiers in part, while he found time to impress on the court of Versailles his own views of the capabilities of the country, the importance of an immediate supply of money, and the maintenance of a naval superiority on the American coasts.

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The plan of this campaign, the last in which any grand efforts were made for the recovery of our colonies, was thus arranged. Lord Cornwallis was instructed to penetrate through the intervening provinces, join Arnold, and attack the marquis de la Fayette, who was now employed as an active partisan in Virginia; while sir Henry Clinton himself engaged to keep Washington and the count Rochambeau in check: early in the year, therefore, his lordship took the field; and having left a considerable force under lord Rawdon for the defence of South Carolina, advanced toward the frontiers, and took a position at Winnsborough; general Leslie proceeding toward Camden. The American commander Greene, with the main body of his forces, marched to the Cheraw hills

Lord Corn-
wallis's
Virginian
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on the Peedee; having detached general Morgan to the west of the Catawba, to act on the left of Cornwallis, collect provisions and forage, and annoy his adversaries by all the means in his power. This movement alarming the British commander for some of his posts, he despatched colonel Tarleton with a force of about 1100 men to counteract it; that officer coming up with the enemy on the seventeenth of January at a place called the Cowpens, immediately engaged them. The militia, which was in the first line, fell back from the impetuosity of the British, who immediately advanced against the second line; which, after an obstinate conflict, retreated to the cavalry: in this crisis, lieutenant-colonel Washington made a successful charge against a troop of British dragoons who were cutting down the militia; and at the same time colonel Howard gallantly rallied the continental troops, and led them to the charge, in which they were joined by the militia. A panic now struck the English; their advance fell back on the rear; a large party of horse took to flight; and the artillery was seized by the Americans: in this state of disorder colonel Howard called out to them to lay down their arms, with the promise of quarter; and it is said that this brave man had in his hand the swords of seven officers who surrendered them to him personally.¹² Tarleton, and fourteen officers, with about forty of the seventeenth regiment of dragoons, cut their way through the opposing cavalry; few others escaped; and the loss of the light troops was irreparable: as this was the first battle in which the Americans had defeated their opponents with the bayonet, its moral effects were felt throughout the country; while congress voted medals to Morgan, Washington, and Howard, descriptive of so memorable a day.

With a hope of retaking the British prisoners, and obliterating the impression made by the late action, lord Cornwallis determined instantly to pursue Morgan, who had moved off toward Virginia; his efforts, however, were eluded by that able partisan, who was

¹² Life of Howard, in American Portrait Gallery.

assisted in his escape by a sudden rise of the Catawba soon after he had passed it, when the English were almost within sight: this enabled him to send forward his prisoners, and collect militia-men to dispute the fords. In the mean time, Greene himself repaired to the banks of this river, riding with great speed 160 miles across the country, and directing his army to join Morgan's detachment by forced marches: as soon, however, as the flood subsided, the British made good their passage over the stream, which is 500 yards wide and three feet deep, under a constant fire of the militia, but without returning it till they had gained the opposite bank; they then easily dispersed their opponents, and followed the flying detachment under privations of the severest kind, to the bank of the Yadkin, which the Americans had previously passed in flats and by fords; but a sudden rise of its waters stopped their pursuers, and was regarded as a second interposition of Providence little less than miraculous.

The two divisions of the American army now effected a junction at Guildford court-house; but their numbers were still so inferior to the British, that Greene determined to retire beyond the Dan into Virginia, and wait for reinforcements. By indefatigable exertions he accomplished this object, and eluded lord Cornwallis, who kept the upper country where the rivers are fordable: so rapid, however, was the pursuit, and so narrow the escape of the retreating army, that its rear had scarcely crossed the Dan, before the van of their adversaries came up, to see all their hopes disappointed, just when they fancied the object of them within their grasp. This retreat of general Greene was considered as a very masterly movement, and raised his reputation highly among his countrymen.

Lord Cornwallis now fell back on Hillsborough, whence he dispersed a proclamation, inviting all loyal subjects to repair thither in arms, for the support of constitutional government: considerable success attended this measure, and colonel Tarleton was sent with a detachment of horse and foot to afford protec-

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tion to the royalists; while general Greene recrossed the Dan, to prevent as much as possible the effects of the proclamation: in the mean time, colonel Pyle had collected a body of nearly 300 loyalists, and was proceeding with them to the British army, when they accidentally fell in with a corps under lieutenant-colonel Lee, who had been sent by Greene to prevent their junction: those unfortunate men, mistaking Lee's troops for their British allies, were suddenly surrounded by them, and cut to pieces, while they were crying out 'God save the king,' and making other protestations of loyalty. Tarleton's detachment happened to be within a mile of this scene of slaughter; and on hearing the alarm, he recrossed the Haw; but meeting in his retreat with another body of loyalists, he mistook them for militia-men, and put them to the sword.

These occurrences, added to the reappearance of the American army in North Carolina, wholly disconcerted lord Cornwallis's schemes; while a sudden revulsion was given to the sentiments of the people; so that, being surrounded with timid friends and inveterate foes, his supplies impeded, and the country wasted, he retreated to a new position on Allamance-creek, between the Haw and Deep rivers. The activity and vigilance of his light troops kept Greene informed of every movement made by the British forces, and enabled him to rest and refresh his men against the day of action, which he determined to bring on whenever his reinforcements should arrive; being confident, that if he could not destroy his enemy, he could at least severely cripple him: according to this determination, the battle of Guildford court-house was fought on the fifteenth of March; the American army consisting of near 5000 men, of which more than half were militia; the British of about 2400, all veteran troops, long used to warfare and to victory. This engagement, which was maintained with obstinate valor on both sides, terminated most honorably to the British arms; but their commander had to lament the loss of nearly one-third of his force: besides, his

troops were exhausted with fatigue, unprovided with tents, and so destitute of provisions, that their allowance on the following day was only a quarter of a pound of flour to each man, and the same quantity of lean beef: the night was dark and tempestuous; the rain fell in torrents on the unprotected, half-famished soldiers; while the cries of wounded and dying men augmented the horrors of the scene. Victory at such a price to lord Cornwallis was defeat: he was therefore obliged to retreat, and commit his wounded to the care and humanity of the enemy. After a few days, Greene found himself in a condition to pursue: when, having left the sick and wounded of both armies in the hands of a congregation of Friends,¹⁸ he followed with great vigor; until, finding it impossible to overtake his foe, he halted at Ramsay's mill, and Cornwallis pushed forward to Wilmington.

Greene then took the resolution of marching directly into South Carolina, to restore the spirits of the people; destroy a line of posts between Camden and Charleston; and, if possible, induce lord Cornwallis to return for their protection: but that commander, after a fruitless effort to divert his adversary's attention, took a contrary route to Petersburg in Virginia: the main body of the Americans then moved towards Camden; and on the twentieth of April took post on the brow of a height called Hobkirk's-hill, about a mile and a half from the British redoubts. On the morning of the twenty-fifth, as the provincials were preparing their breakfast, lord Rawdon attempted a surprise, by passing through a swamp to the left of the encampment: the piquets, however, received him promptly, and retired disputing the ground, until they joined the main body; when a sanguinary conflict ensued. The Americans, supported by artillery, and superior in numbers, extended their front with an apparent intention of surrounding the enemy; when lord Rawdon conceived one of those quick and happy designs which the exigences of war call forth in those who are fitted for command: he instantly ordered his

¹⁸ His parents, as well as himself, were of this persuasion.

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columns to form one line; and, thin as it was, charged the enemy with such impetuosity, as to put them completely to the rout: but military excellence was of little avail when unaided by political sagacity; the reinforcements intended by ministers to join his lordship were not sent in due time; so that he was obliged to retire from the scene of victory, and act on the defensive: at length, a portion of the expected troops being arrived at Charleston, he marched thither to effect a junction. In his absence, Greene captured Orangeburg, Forte Motte, Granby, and several other places; after which he invested the strong post of Ninety-six; but before it could be reduced, lord Rawdon was enabled to bring up his forces and to raise the siege: the American commander then retired into North Carolina with his enemy in full pursuit: but his firmness and decision sustained him under this trial of fortune; for being advised to abandon South Carolina to its fate, his reply was, 'I will recover the country, or perish in the attempt.' The British general soon perceived that pursuit was vain; and that while he was moving away from all support, his antagonist was falling back on magazines and reinforcements, drawing him toward the very track over which he had formerly led Cornwallis: being already short of provisions, he returned to Ninety-six, and thence to Charleston, taking with him all the families of loyalists in that district. The division of his forces, made for the escort of these unfortunate persons, encouraged Greene again to hang on his rear and flanks, until the heat compelled him to retire, after having succeeded in recovering greatest part of Georgia and the two Carolinas: being joined by the detachments under Lee, Sumpter, and Marion, he encamped on the hills of Santee, while his antagonist retired to Orangeburg, and soon afterwards found it necessary, for the sake of his health, to revisit his native land.

During the late disasters, the turn of sentiment among American loyalists, and the treachery of some who had joined the British standard, were more than usually apparent: an example therefore to deter others

from similar desertion was among the last acts of lord Rawdon; when colonel Isaac Haynes, who had taken the oath of allegiance, having been captured fighting on the side of the Americans, was condemned and executed as a traitor at Charleston: his death produced a menacing proclamation from general Greene, and was much canvassed in England; the conduct of lord Rawdon being reprobated by one party, while it was justified by the other: after his lordship's departure, the military command devolved on colonel Stewart, who was attacked by the enemy on the eighth of September, at Eutaw springs, having previously suffered a loss of more than 300 men, who were surprised in foraging. The most obstinate and bloody battle that had yet taken place ensued; and the artillery on both sides was several times taken and retaken: the American militia behaved with the firmness of veterans, advancing with shouts into the hottest fire of their opponents; and as one part of their line faltered for an instant, the British troops, elated at the prospect, sprang forward to improve their advantage: but in so doing, they deranged their own ranks; when Greene, observing the incident, ordered the second, or Maryland line, to advance with fixed bayonets, and sweep the field: in this encounter, it fell to the lot of the gallant colonel Howard, who commanded the second American regiment, to meet the Buffs, whose resistance was so stubborn, that numbers of the Marylanders and British were mutually transfixed with each other's bayonets. Colonel Howard, in a letter, says, 'nearly one-half of my men were killed or wounded, and I had seven officers out of twelve disabled:' toward the end of the battle, he himself received a ball in the left shoulder;¹⁴ vast numbers fell on each side; and each claimed the victory: but the result was favorable to the Americans; for the British retired, and thenceforward confined their operations to the vicinity of Charleston. For his last battle, Greene was presented by congress with a gold medal, and one of the British standards. His services in the

¹⁴ Life of John Eager Howard, in American Portrait Gallery.

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whole of this memorable campaign were handsomely recompensed at the end of the war by his grateful country: but the most honorable testimony to his merit was the high praise bestowed on him by Washington, and the unfeigned respect with which that great man always regarded his memory.

The proceedings of lord Cornwallis remain now to be noticed. When his lordship left the Carolinas, he hoped that lord Rawdon would be able to maintain his ground, even if general Greene did not follow him into Virginia, as he expected: in the most unfavorable event, he flattered himself, that by the conquest of this latter province, the recovery of the Carolinas would be at any time practicable: accordingly, before the end of April, he commenced his progress, and in less than a month the march from Wilmington to Petersburg was completed, though not without opposition from detachments of the provincials. Here the royal forces under general Philips augmented his army; and the junction had scarcely been effected, before his mind was set at ease by intelligence from lord Rawdon of an advantage gained over Greene, as well as of the departure of three regiments from Cork, destined for Charleston: soon afterwards, a reinforcement of 1500 men arrived from New York, and Virginia became the chief scene of operations during the remainder of the campaign. The very responsible charge of counteracting this formidable force was committed to la Fayette, who acquitted himself of it with great credit; and the attempts of lord Cornwallis, 'to catch the boy,' as he used to term his youthful antagonist, turned eventually to his own confusion. One of the means used by la Fayette to prevent capture by an overwhelming superiority of force, was the formation of a legionary corps of horse and foot; the latter being composed of three companies, picked men from his three regiments of infantry, which always lay between the two armies, and exercised the strictest vigilance: they were commanded by major M'Pherson and captain Ogden.¹⁵ At first, he was obliged to re-

¹⁵ Life of Ogden, in American National Gallery.

tire from the approaching storm, having only 1000
 regulars, 2000 militia, and about sixty dragoons,
 under his command. CHAP.
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Cornwallis, having advanced beyond the South Anna river, was enabled, not only to destroy large quantities of property, but by his great superiority in cavalry to traverse the country in all directions; two expeditions, therefore, were undertaken: the first, sent under colonel Tarleton against Charlotteville, dispersed the assembly there, captured seven of its members, and destroyed an abundance of stores; the other, ordered to Point of Fork, under colonel Simcoe, was but partially successful; as the Americans had removed many of their stores from that place. The British made various conquests, but were seldom able to retain them longer than their time of encampment: the marquis, with a tact and prudence that would have become a veteran officer, acted cautiously on the defensive, making so judicious a choice of posts and movements, as to prevent any advantage from being taken of his weakness: at Racoon ford he effected a junction with general Wayne, who brought with him a body of 800 Pennsylvanians; and then dexterously throwing his whole force between the British army and the American stores at Albemarle old court house, he obliged Cornwallis to fall back on Richmond without any booty. About the same time his army was augmented by Steuben's corps, and a large body of provincial militia: he then followed his antagonist, and had the address to impress him with a notion that the American army was much larger than it really was: the British general therefore thought proper to retire to Williamsburg, where his rear was attacked by a light corps under colonel Butler, and suffered considerable loss.

It was a principal object with the British, in this campaign, to fix on some strong post as a place of security both for the army and navy: Portsmouth and Hampton-roads were at first selected, but afterwards abandoned for York-town and Gloucester-point, two places separated by York river, and nearly opposite

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to each other: these lord Cornwallis proceeded to fortify so as to render them tenable, by his present army of 7000 men, against any force likely to be brought against him: but having taken a general view of affairs, he came to an opinion that greater numbers would be necessary for effecting the object of the campaign; and he conceived no hopes of ultimate success without very active co-operation on the part of his superior in command.

Sir Henry Clinton, however, instead of reinforcing lord Cornwallis, turned his attention solely to New York, against which he apprehended an attack by the combined French and American armies: for the defence of this important post, he required his lordship to despatch the troops which had been sent to him from Virginia, unless he was engaged in operations that required their assistance, or would employ them in making an effectual diversion of Washington's army, by undertaking a joint expedition, with the loyalists, to the upper part of the Chesapeake; and as this plan did not suit Cornwallis, he sent back the troops. The war however now became so far involved in naval operations, that a maritime superiority would be most likely to secure success to either party: the British army being divided and parcelled out at various sea ports, any portion of it, blocked up by a French fleet, and surrounded by American troops, might easily be compelled to surrender: for this purpose, and in subserviency to the designs of Washington, the count de Grasse sailed in March from Brest, with twenty-five sail of the line, several thousand troops, and a large convoy. A small part only of this force was detached for the East Indies: the rest steered for Martinique; and having eluded the British admirals Hood and Drake, formed a junction there with nine ships of the line, and on the thirteenth of August cast anchor in the Chesapeake: for that station also, a French squadron, under the count de Barras, consisting of eight line-of-battle-ships, sailed from Rhode Island five days before the arrival of de Grasse, taking a circuit by Bermuda, to avoid the British fleet.

Admiral Graves, with twenty sail, made an effort to relieve Cornwallis, but without effect. When he appeared off the capes of Virginia, de Grasse put to sea, chiefly to protect the squadron from Rhode Island; and an indecisive action took place on the seventh of September: the British were willing to renew it; but the French admiral, for good reasons, declined an engagement: his purpose was effected when Barras got safe within the capes; the French fleet then possessed a decided superiority; Graves departed from the coast, and de Grasse re-entered the Chesapeake. During this time, according to a well-digested plan, the French and American forces were on their march toward York-town.

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Washington, after providing for the defence of his posts on the Hudson, led his army down the western side of that river, so as to mask his intentions by exciting apprehensions for Staten Island; and it was not till he had passed the Delaware, that his real object became suspected by the British commander. The combined forces, amounting to 12,000 men, assembled at Williamsburg on the twenty-fifth of September, and five days afterwards moved down to invest York-town: at the same time the French fleet advanced to the mouth of York river, so as to prevent Cornwallis from retreating, or obtaining succor by sea: about this time however he received a letter from sir Henry Clinton, announcing the arrival of admiral Digby with three ships of the line from England, and his own determination to embark with 5000 men for his relief; after which intelligence, his lordship retired to a more inward position.

Siege of
lord Corn-
wallis in
York-town.

On the night of the sixth of October the first parallel was begun within 600 yards of the British lines; and on the ninth and tenth, the attacks of the besiegers commenced with formidable energy; their shells reaching the ships in harbor, and the Charon frigate of forty-four guns, with a transport, being burned: on the eleventh, the second parallel was begun at the distance of 200 yards from the works. As two advanced redoubts, on the left of the British line, greatly impeded

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Surrender
of lord
Cornwallis
to the
Americans.

the progress of their antagonists, it was proposed to carry them by storm; and to excite a spirit of emulation, the reduction of one was committed to the Americans under la Fayette, and the other to the French under the baron de Viomenil: each was attacked and carried with unloaded arms, but not without a considerable loss of men, especially on the side of the French; these outworks were then included in the second parallel, and greatly aided the operations of the besiegers: on the sixteenth, a sally was made by a party of British troops under colonel Abercrombie, who spiked eleven cannon, without being able to gain any essential advantage: but the besieging batteries were by this time mounted with 100 pieces of ordnance, and the British works were in a state of ruin. No hopes of safety now remained, for no succors arrived: and after an attempt to escape in boats to Gloucester-point, which was frustrated by a violent storm, lord Cornwallis proposed a cessation of hostilities for twenty-four hours to settle terms of capitulation. The American general, in his answer, professed 'an ardent desire to save the effusion of blood, and to accept such terms as were admissible;' and thus began a negotiation, which ended in a treaty, by which, on the nineteenth of October, the posts were given up; the troops and stores being surrendered to Washington, the ships and seamen to the count de Grasse. The honor of marching out with colors flying, which had been refused to general Lincoln at Charleston, was now, by way of retaliation, denied to lord Cornwallis: Lincoln also was appointed to receive the submission of the royal army, in the same manner as his own had been conducted eighteen months before; but the Americans behaved on the whole with great forbearance and delicacy toward the vanquished. This was the last military achievement in which Washington was personally engaged: no other indeed was requisite; for the fall of York-town was but a prelude to the emancipation of North America.

A British fleet with 7000 troops, destined for the relief of Cornwallis, arrived off the Chesapeake on the

twenty-fourth of October; but on receiving intelligence of his surrender, they returned to New York. Considerable censure was incurred by the British commanders on this occasion, but without sufficient reason: the campaign had not been deficient in energy, nor had Cornwallis committed any material error in taking up his positions; but the force under his command was very inadequate to his exigences: by this time we had taught the American militia to fight, and the resources of their vast country could not be taken from them: moreover while Washington, fixed in his impregnable posts on the Hudson, kept sir Henry Clinton in check, and alarmed him for the fate of New York, the latter was unable to undertake any distant enterprise; though the American commander himself could gain the start of his antagonist, whenever he chose to advance on Virginia. The real blame lay with our ministers at home, whose Aulic council was little calculated to direct the movements of armies on the other side of the Atlantic; and who furnished not our commanders with resources sufficient to subdue the colonies, assisted as they were directly by three European powers, and favored indirectly by all the rest. It was indeed pleasantly said by lord North of the British generals in America, that 'he did not know whether they would frighten the enemy; but he was sure they frightened him whenever he thought of them:' the sarcasm, however, would have been more apposite, if it had been applied by our military officers to the members of the British cabinet.

CHAPTER XXIV.

GEORGE III. (CONTINUED.)—1781.

Sentiments of foreign powers towards England—Prevailing disaffection at home toward ministers—Arrival of the news concerning lord Cornwallis's surrender, &c.—King's speech—Debates on address, &c.—Attack on sir George Rodney and general Vaughan regarding the capture of St. Eustace, &c.—Debates on the army estimates—Motions of sir James Lowther for peace—Declining influence of administration—Renewed debates—Mr. Pitt's speech, &c.—Discharge of Mr. Laurens—Parliament adjourns—Addresses to his majesty for a dismissal of ministers—Admiral Kempenfeldt's action—Domestic events—Appearance of the heir apparent at court, &c.—State of Spain and France—Events in the West Indies—Capture of St. Christopher's, &c.—Plan of attack on ministers—Fox's motions for inquiry into the navy, &c.—Event discouraging to the ministers—Debates on lord George Germaine's elevation to the peerage—Attacks on administration—Lord North resigns—Rockingham administration—Mr. Pitt's situation—That of Fox and Burke—Sentiments of the cabinet—Resolutions agreed on—Affairs of Ireland, and establishment of its legislative independence—Bill passed regarding contractors and revenue officers—Resolutions regarding Wilkes expunged from the journals—Borough of Cricklade disfranchised—Debates on parliamentary reform—Subject introduced by Mr. Pitt, &c.—East India affairs—Passing of Mr. Burke's bill for economical reform—Proposals for peace with Holland—Low estimation of England at this time by the continental powers—Great Britain recovers her consequence by Rodney's glorious victory—Honors bestowed on the admiral, &c.—Tardy negotiations for peace.

Sentiments of foreign powers towards England. DURING the events described in the preceding chapter, no efforts were made by any European power to assist Great Britain; for where open hostility did not exist, a jealous combination, adverse to her interests, prevailed. The spirit which animated the armed confederacy had been long and studiously encouraged

by the king of Prussia, who retained all his resentment against George III. and the British cabinet: he even ordered his subjects to withdraw their money from the English funds, under the pretence that a national bankruptcy was inevitable; and thus contributed, as far as in him lay, to bring on so great a calamity: he next endeavored to persuade the czarina that Great Britain had commenced hostilities against the Dutch, on account of their accession to the armed neutrality, and that she was called on by treaty to assist them: but though he was unable to convince her on this point, he diminished her attachment to the English, and proportionally increased her desire to extend that obnoxious confederacy to which he himself now became a party: nor did a long period elapse, before the emperor Joseph, who had suddenly imbibed a great partiality to France, gave in his adhesion to it, after the renewal and failure of an attempt at mediation by Austria and Russia; a mediation proposed, not from any feelings of good will to us, but with a hope of establishing the principles of their armed confederacy. Great Britain, however, was not yet so reduced, as to permit the interference of any foreign power between herself and her revolted subjects; and her declaration to this effect served as a pretext to the house of Bourbon for renewing its profession of good faith toward the Americans.

Nor were perplexities arising from the aspect of foreign relations lessened by the smooth current of domestic affairs. During the recess of parliament disaffection to the cause of ministers began to prevail; and this was augmented, not only by complaints of speculative grievances unredressed, by the misrepresentations of political demagogues, corresponding committees, and mock representatives; but by the profuse expenditure of government, and the enormous increase of taxes; by repeated instances of alleged misconduct regarding the navy, and by the apparent folly of resisting, with inadequate means, a combination of so many powers. Besides, the authority of the mother country over her colonies had been so often

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qualified and explained, and even partially renounced, that people came to think it might be given up without involving the ruin of our constitution: at all events, the public no longer remained unconcerned as to the future effects of this war, nor did the nation slumber in a state of torpid security, when the second session of parliament opened on the twenty-seventh of November.

Arrival of
the news of
lord Corn-
wallis's
disaster.

Two days before this event, official intelligence of Cornwallis's surrender arrived, about noon, at the house of lord George Germaine; and the manner in which it was received by the personages most interested in its consequences, has been accurately detailed by a lively annalist of those times.¹

Lord Walsingham, who had been under secretary of state, and was to second the address in the house of lords, happened to be there when the messenger came. Without communication with any other person, lord George, for the sake of despatch, immediately proceeded with him, in a hackney-coach, to the residence of lord Stormont in Portland-place, whom they took into the carriage, and then drove to the chancellor's house in Great Russell-street: after a short consultation, they determined to lay it themselves in person before lord North, who had received no intimation of the event when they arrived in Downing-street, between one and two o'clock. The minister's firmness, and even his presence of mind, gave way for a short time under this disaster. 'I asked lord George afterwards,' says sir Nathaniel, 'how he took the communication?' 'As he would have taken a ball in his breast,' was the reply: 'he opened his arms, exclaiming wildly, as he paced the apartment during a few minutes, 'O. God! it is all over';—words which he repeated many times under emotions of the deepest agitation and distress.' The next picture drawn is that of a cabinet council in terror. When the first agitation had subsided, the four ministers discussed the question, whether it might not be expedient to prorogue the meeting of parliament for a few days;

¹ Sir Nathaniel Wraxall.

but, as scarcely an interval of forty-eight hours remained before the appointed time of meeting, and as many members of both houses had arrived in London, or were on their way, the proposition was abandoned. It became, however, indispensable to alter, and almost to remodel, the king's speech: this was done without delay; and at the same time, lord George, as secretary for America, sent off a despatch to his majesty at Kew, acquainting him with the fate of Cornwallis. The narrator then proceeds:—'I dined on that day with lord George; and although the information, which had reached London in the course of the morning from France, as well as from the official report, was of a nature not to admit of long concealment, yet it had not been communicated to me or to any other individual of the company when I got to Pall Mall between five and six. Lord Walsingham, who also dined there, was the only person, except our host, who was acquainted with the fact: the party, nine in number, set down to table; when I thought the master of the house appeared serious, though he manifested no discomposure.

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'Before dinner was over, one of the servants delivered to him a letter, brought back by the messenger who had been despatched to the king. Lord George opened and perused it; then, looking at lord Walsingham, 'the king writes,' said he, 'just as he always does, except that I observe he has neglected to mark the hour and minute of writing, with his usual precision.' This remark, though calculated to awaken some interest, excited no comment; and while the ladies remained in the room, we repressed our curiosity: but they had no sooner withdrawn, than lord George acquainted us that information had just arrived from Paris of old count Maurepas lying at the point of death. 'It would grieve me,' said I, 'to finish my career, however far advanced in years, were I first minister of France, before I had witnessed the termination of this great contest between England and America.'—'He has survived to see that event,' replied lord George with some agitation. The conver-

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sation was prolonged, until, mention being made of the Virginian campaign, the minister disclosed the full bearing of the intelligence: 'the army,' said he, 'has surrendered; and you may peruse the particulars of the capitulation in that paper:' the paper was taken from his pocket, and read to the company. The next question was one of rather an obtrusive kind, to ask what the king thought on the subject. The minister's remark imported, that it did the highest honor to his majesty's firmness, fortitude, and consistency: but this was a complying moment, and the billet was read to the following effect:—'I have received with sentiments of the deepest concern, the communication which lord George Germaine has made to me, of the unfortunate result of operations in Virginia: I particularly lament it on account of the consequences connected with it, and the difficulties which it may produce in carrying on the public business, or in repairing such a misfortune: but I trust that neither lord George Germaine, nor any other member of the cabinet, will suppose that it makes the smallest alteration in those principles of conduct, which have directed me in past time, and which will always continue to animate me, under every event, in the prosecution of the present contest.' Whatever opinion may be entertained about the contest with our American colonies, it must be confessed that much dignity and self-command was displayed in this reply.²

Meeting of
parliament.

In conformity with this communication to lord George Germaine was the tone of the king's speech from the throne. His majesty, after expressing concern at the sad reverses in Virginia, declared 'that he could not consent to sacrifice, either to his own desire of peace, or to the temporary ease and relief of his subjects, those essential rights and permanent interests on which the strength and security of this country must ever principally depend: he retained a firm confidence in the protection of Divine Providence, and a

² In a letter to lord North, in December, his majesty disclaims any change in his sentiments, as, 'to getting a peace at the expense of a separation from America, to which no difficulties will induce him to consent.'—Extracts, &c.

perfect conviction of the justice of his cause;' and he concluded by calling 'for the concurrence and support of parliament, together with a vigorous, animated, and united exertion of the faculties and resources of his people.'

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An amendment to the address was moved by the earl of Shelburne: he was not surprised at the sentiments of the sovereign, which marked a dignity and firmness of character supporting him under the pressure of calamities; nor was he surprised that ministers should take advantage of such noble sentiments, to frame a speech flattering to his majesty's personal feelings; but the state of the country required them to resist all such impulses, and honestly to impart such advice as might tend to retrieve affairs. He decried the whole conduct of the war, imputing its disasters to a want of system, combination, and intelligence: by our method of following the French, we had yielded to them every advantage; for wherever they despatched a large force, we tardily pursued with a small one. After expressing his fears lest we should find another Chesapeake at Plymouth or in the Thames, and declaiming against the war with Holland as a perfidious measure, he concluded with an observation of lord Chatham, implying, that if the present system were pursued, 'his majesty's crown would soon be not worth his wearing.'

Debates on
American
affairs.

The duke of Richmond carried his censure of ministers still farther, and ascribed all the faults of government to an interior cabinet; quoting also a declaration of lord Chatham, that 'when he entered the king's closet, he found the ground rotten, and himself duped and deceived:' the marquis of Rockingham concurred in reprobating a system of favoritism or unconstitutional influence; and drew a very unfavorable picture of the present period, as compared with the state of the nation at the king's accession: lord Camden attributed our disasters principally to the deranged state of the navy, to irresolution and want of vigor in the cabinet, but above all to the fatal error of continuing to direct our main efforts against America, the subju-

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gation of which ought to be a secondary object: the measures of government were principally defended by lord Stormont, the earl of Hillsborough, and the lord chancellor; when the amendment was rejected by seventy-five to thirty-one, and three peers only subscribed their names to a short protest.

In the house of commons, Mr. Fox moved an amendment similar to that of lord Shelburne, declaring 'that any one unacquainted with the British constitution, and not knowing that the speech was contrived by a cabinet council, would pronounce it that of an arbitrary and unfeeling monarch, who, having involved the slaves, his subjects, in a ruinous and unnatural war, to glut his enmity or satiate his revenge, was determined to persevere in spite of calamity or fate itself.' The mover of the address had complained in strong terms of certain members so lost to honor and duty, as to glory in the success of the enemy: in reply to this invective, Mr. Fox observed, that lord Chatham, in the very commencement of the dispute, 'thanked God that America had resisted the claims of the mother country.' 'But all the calamities of the nation,' he continued, 'are ascribed to the wishes, the joy, and the speeches of opposition. O miserable and unfortunate ministers! Blind and incapable men! whose measures are framed with so little foresight, and executed with so little firmness, that they crumble to pieces and bring ruin on the country, merely because a rash, weak, or wicked man in the house of commons makes a speech against them! Retrospective measures are deprecated; but ministers must bear to hear them from the representatives of an abused people: he even trusted that they would hear them at the tribunal of justice, and expiate them on the public scaffold: he would not say that they were actually in the pay of France, for he could not prove the fact; but they had worked for the aggrandisement of the *grand monarque* more faithfully than any minister of his own had ever done.' In support of these assertions, Mr. Fox reviewed the origin and conduct of the war; ascribing our loss of the colonies to the undue influence

of the crown, and connecting the calamities of the nation with its system of government, and with men in power: it was only by changing the one, and removing the others, that the fountain-head could be purified, and the stream cleansed from contamination.

Mr. Thomas Pitt hesitated not to affirm that no administration could be carried on, without bringing to account those who had reduced the nation to its present disgraceful condition: it signified little what puppets directed the machine of government, while a secret poisoning influence remained: he hoped ministers would not be displaced till they had brought the nation to such a crisis as must draw down on them a suitable reward: he would not consent to a shilling of supply in support of a war to which the country gentlemen had unfortunately afforded too much countenance. Several other members spoke in very reproachful terms of the condition of our navy; and were answered by lord Mulgrave, who refuted many assertions by contradicting evidence, and affirmed that at no previous time had so ample and effective a marine been provided: the present war might be calamitous, but it was not disgraceful; nor could any period be mentioned when the honor and spirit of the nation were at a more glorious height. Lord North treated with scorn the insinuation that ministers were in the pay of France, vindicated their zeal in the service of their country, and ascribed any errors which had been committed to the head rather than to the heart. The American war was prosecuted, not with the infamous design of aggrandising the crown at the expense of the constitution, but of preserving unbroken that old and venerable fabric for which our forefathers had bled, and which all Europe envied. Because a melancholy disaster had occurred in Virginia, were we on that account to lie down and die? No: it should rather animate us to more bold and vigorous exertions. As for himself, he would not be deterred by menaces of impeachment from striving to preserve the rights and legislative authority of parliament: the war had been unfortunate, but not unjust; founded in right, and

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dictated by necessity: he had always thought so; and if the share he had taken in it should bring him to the scaffold, his opinions would remain unaltered.

This speech of the premier moved the indignation of Mr. Burke, who called it not only imprudent, but audacious: 'the war,' he said 'was not unfortunate, but disgraceful; for the former epithet could only apply to occurrences in which fortune alone was concerned; while the present contest exhibited neither plan nor foresight: victory and defeat in this case were equally calamitous, for each instigated us to go on: but the king's speech was the greatest of all calamities, since it showed the determination of ministers to consume our ruin.' Alluding to the rights for which it was said we went to war, he asked, whether we ought to risk every thing, forfeit every thing, and think of no consequences, for the sake of a right? Did we not know that right, without might, is worth very little; and that a claim, without the power of enforcing it, was nugatory in the copyhold of rival states? 'O! says a silly man, full of his prerogative of dominion over a few beasts of the field; there is excellent wool on the back of a wolf; therefore he must be sheared. What! shear a wolf? Yes. But will he comply? Have you considered the trouble, and how you will get this wool? O! I have considered nothing, and I will consider nothing, but my right: a wolf is an animal that has wool; all animals that have wool are to be shorn; and therefore I will shear the wolf.' Such was the kind of reasoning urged by the minister of this country.

After a very protracted discussion, the amendment was negatived: on bringing up the report of the address, the debate was renewed, and principally distinguished by an eloquent harangue of Mr. William Pitt, who, after showing that no confidence ought to be placed in men who could not confide in each other, proceeded to analyse the different reasons assigned for continuing the war. Lord North had argued that it was just and necessary: with regard to its justice, nothing need be said; but the term necessity, as

applied to its prolongation, was not easily understood; it could mean nothing short of physical necessity; and to say that an end could not be put to the contest, if parliament were so resolved, was an absurdity too gross for animadversion. Lord George Germaine had rested all his hopes on the more mild and moderate expectation of the practicability of despatching a force which would enable the friends of Great Britain to conquer their opponents: to appreciate the wisdom of this conceit, Mr. Pitt recommended a retrospect of the war; the events of the last campaign; and particularly the tenth article of lord Cornwallis's capitulation, which left all the friends of Great Britain, all the loyalists who had been treacherously deluded to join our army, to the civil justice of their country: he could not define the civil justice of America; but if the same treacherous system which had long disgraced England were persevered in, civil justice might overtake those who were much more proper objects of its operation.

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Mr. Burke also adverted, in terms of great severity, to the capitulation, and the omission of any article to secure American loyalists from the vengeance of their countrymen. 'It is a horrible spectacle,' said he, 'which must meet the eyes of a prince of the blood,^s who cannot sail along the American coast without beholding the faithful adherents of his father hanging in quarters on every head-land.' He then compared the surrender of York-town with that of Saratoga; branding ministers as the cause of such disasters, and the address as the most infamous, abandoned, and lying paper on which the house had ever been called to vote.

Mr. Courtenay undertook the defence of lord Cornwallis, and the report was received by a majority of 131 to 54. His lordship, however, was not the only commander exposed to animadversion; for sir George Rodney and general Vaughan also fell under the lash of Mr. Burke, who, in a motion for copies of their instructions, represented them as cruel and cowardly

Censures
on Rodney
and
Vaughan.

^s Prince William Henry, then a midshipman in the fleet.

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in their meditated attack on St. Vincent's, and as wanton and rapacious plunderers of St. Eustace: he displayed the absurdity of selling the stores in such a manner as to furnish the enemy with supplies; and accused the admiral of promoting their success, by lingering on the spot, to which his own interests fixed him, while the French fleet was reinforced, and Tobago taken. Rodney, in his defence, stated that he appeared before St. Eustace to cut off supplies from the enemy; to whom the inhabitants, though nominally friends of England, had acted as allies: many residents, who called themselves Englishmen, were not ashamed to supply warlike stores for the destruction of their country; and then he had determined not to spare: instead of suffering such stores to be conveyed to the enemy's islands, directly or indirectly, he had ordered them all to his majesty's dépôts at Antigua; instead of remaining inactive, he had planned two expeditions, against Curaçoa and Surinam, when he received advice that a French fleet of ten or twelve sail, with about seventy transports, was steering for Martinique; and despatched sir Samuel Hood with fifteen sail to meet them. His intention afterwards to fight de Grasse was disconcerted by intelligence conveyed to the French admiral; and he detailed facts which fully exculpated him in not succoring Tobago, or preventing the catastrophe in Virginia. General Vaughan protested, on his honor, that he was not directly or indirectly enriched to the extent of one shilling by the capture of St. Eustace; and that he had treated the enemy with the utmost lenity: on the whole, he had acted to the best of his judgment, for his country's good, and not his own; and as he was neither a lawyer nor a merchant, he should never under similar circumstances act differently.

In debating the army estimates the principle of the war again came under consideration; when a motion for wholly stopping supplies being overruled, sir James Lowther moved a resolution, 'that the contest carried on in North America had been ineffectual in protecting

the king's subjects, or defeating the dangerous designs of his enemies.' If this proposition were assented to, he would follow it with another; 'that all farther attempts to reduce the revolted provinces were repugnant to the true interests of this kingdom, as tending to weaken its efforts against ancient and powerful enemies.' He was seconded, in a long and able speech, by Mr. Powys, who declared that the country gentlemen, long deceived, could be deluded no longer; for no idea of American revenue remained; no idea of alleviating the burdens of Great Britain by carrying on the war: there could be no other motive than to preserve the power, the consequence, and the emoluments that flowed from it.

Lord North acknowledged the fairness and unexceptionable moderation of the motions; but he refused to concur in them, chiefly because they formed a parliamentary advertisement to the enemy, respecting the manner in which the next campaign would be conducted; but he acknowledged, as the estimates themselves would show, that government had no intention of substituting another army for that surrendered by lord Cornwallis: posts must be maintained, and defended in case of attack; and British commerce must be protected against American cruisers; but sir James Lowther's motion would prevent the accomplishment of all these objects.

Lord George Germaine coincided in opinion with the premier, but declared that whenever the house adopted a resolution to give up America, he would retire; for American independence would be ruin to the British empire. Mr. Dunning also, though he acquiesced in the motions, asserted the same sentiment; adding, with great warmth, that the proposition to declare America independent fell very little short of high treason: the motion, however, for the order of the day was carried by a majority of only forty-one, twenty of the usual supporters of administration going over to the opposition.

This debate was renewed in the next sitting of the house, on the fourteenth of December; when the

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eloquence of Mr. Pitt was displayed in exhibiting the great difference of principles among the members of the cabinet: he described them as being at war with each other in opinion, and distrustful of mutual support; yet meanly continuing in power for the enjoyment of office, and responsible for measures of which they could not approve. Their only principle of coherence, he averred, seemed to be the ruin of the empire; an object, which, he feared, they might accomplish ere the vengeance of the people could overtake them: 'and God grant,' he added, 'that the punishment be not so long delayed as to involve a great and innocent family; who, though they share not the guilt, will most likely participate in the atonement.'

Sir George Savile ridiculed the address, and likened the crown and parliament to dancers in a minuet to a tune of the minister's composition: the crown led off one way, the parliament in a similar step to the opposite corner: they then joined hands, and the dance ended as it began. He also compared ministers to the Spartan, who, in a naval engagement, swam to a galley, and seized the stern with his right hand, which was instantly chopped off: he then renewed the effort with his left, which shared the same fate; and when asked if he still meant to persevere, made answer by seizing the galley with his teeth.⁴ Thus, administration had lost two armies (both their hands) in attempts on America; yet, like the Lacedemonian, they were determined to proceed; but they should remember, that when he did so, he was deprived of his head. On a division, the majority was 166 to 84, being less favorable to opposition than that of the preceding day. A strong attempt in the house of lords, made by the marquis of Rockingham, to prevent the third reading of the malt and land-tax bills before the recess, was also rejected: debates occurred on the subject of Mr. Laurens, who was still detained in the Tower; and

⁴ The speaker appears to have made a slight mistake in attributing this absurd act of heroism to a Spartan; as it is set down by ancient historians to the credit of Cynægirus, an Athenian, after the battle of Marathon. Herodotus, however, makes him lose only his right hand.

Mr. Burke gave notice of a motion in his behalf; but this was rendered unnecessary by the discharge of that gentleman, in exchange for general Burgoyne.

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The adjournment of parliament, though, as usual, strongly resisted, was favorable to opposition: the administration was evidently shaken; the country gentlemen had shown a disposition to desert, however unwilling they might be to impede the exertions of government; opinions gained ground respecting divisions in the cabinet; and public meetings, with committees and delegates, still continued: an address to his majesty, accompanied with a petition, was voted on the sixth of December, by the city of London, reprobating his speech from the throne, as well as the whole conduct of this war; and requiring the dismissal of all his advisers, both public and private. A similar address was voted, chiefly through the exertions of Mr. Fox, in Westminster; while the counties of Middlesex and Surrey, the West India planters, and many other public bodies, adopted a similar measure. Still the principle of the war was not generally unpopular; and the improbability of success alone occasioned irritability in the people: neither did the aspect of military operations at the close of this, and the opening of the succeeding year, serve to allay public indignation. The French government having sent out a naval armament with large supplies for their East and West India squadrons, admiral Kempenfeldt was despatched, with twelve sail of the line, a fifty gun ship, and four frigates, for the purpose of intercepting them. That commander, whose skill in manœuvring a fleet could hardly be surpassed, having fortunately met the enemy's ships dispersed by a gale of wind off Ushant, succeeded in capturing twenty transports, laden with ordnance stores and troops; but he was obliged to retire from a closer contest, on account of the great inferiority of his force. The valuable prizes which he brought into port, by enhancing the loss of what remained behind, served to increase the public murmurs against ministers, who were loudly and justly censured, both in and out of

Action of
admiral
Kempen-
feldt.

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Domestic
events.

the house, for their deficiency in information, and gross neglect of duty.

Among the principal domestic events of the year, may be reckoned the court held at St. James's, on the first of January, at which the prince of Wales made his appearance on the occasion of his acquiring a separate establishment. Even at this time he was unquestionably one of the most accomplished men of his age: in countenance and person eminently handsome, he joined the most elegant manners with very considerable endowments of mind: he was not only a good classical scholar, but he spoke with fluency several modern languages: his taste in the fine arts, which ultimately led to a munificent encouragement of them, was very early conspicuous; and his proficiency in music, both vocal and instrumental, was far from contemptible: with such talents and accomplishments, even without the addition of his illustrious rank, he would have been courted by all, whose genius, wit, and eloquence infuse a charm into society. The chosen associates of this prince, at his entrance into life, were men of fascinating manners and transcendent abilities; but unfortunately there was among them a party, who, to gain an ascendancy over his mind, scrupled not to pander to his love of pleasure: he had been brought up with an anxious attention, due to one on whose character the destiny of millions depended; but perhaps the restraints of his education were more strict than a judicious consideration of circumstances would have warranted: be this as it may, as soon as he was relieved from tutelage, he rushed headlong into dissipations, which invited him under the most seductive forms, and which were even prepared by those, whose social qualities rendered them very dangerous companions. In the year preceding that of which we are now treating, the prince had formed a very objectionable connexion with the celebrated Mrs. Robinson, known by the name of Perdita; and the consequence was an expensive establishment for the lady, whose house was frequented by persons of high rank and talents. At any time this would have been repre-

hensible; but it was particularly so in the face of a court like that of George III., and at the close of so disastrous and expensive a war: the king felt the stroke severely, although the harshest epithet applied by him to his heir apparent was that of 'a thoughtless boy:' very different however were his sentiments concerning those who had taken advantage of that thoughtlessness, and whom he ever afterwards regarded as the seducers of his son. After the prince's appearance at court, he received and accepted invitations from the high nobility: the most splendid of the fêtes which he honored with his presence, and those which most influenced his future course, were at Devonshire-house, where, to use the elegant language of Moore, 'politics sat enthroned, like Virtue among the Epicureans, with all the Graces and Pleasures for hand-maids.' There his intimacy with Fox and Sheridan commenced; an intimacy, which not only turned his mind to politics, but favored his propensity to dissipation; though it must be confessed that he owed much to the converse of those accomplished persons, in the exercise of his faculties, and the cultivation of his taste.

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Early in March, a distemper broke out again among horned cattle; when those that were diseased were ordered by an act of council to be killed, and the carcasses to be buried: about the same time also advices were received of the tremendous hurricane which took place toward the end of last year in the West Indies, with a loss of the following ships of war: the Thunderer, seventy-four guns; the Stirling Castle, sixty-four; Phoenix, forty-four; and Scarborough, twenty. In August, his majesty, accompanied by the prince of Wales, paid a visit to the Nore, and held a naval levee on board the Fortitude, which carried vice-admiral Parker's flag. With regard to the internal affairs of our principal opponents, it may be observed, that Spain was exhausting her strength before Gibraltar, on which she could make no impression; and that Neckar had been long laboring to bring the finances of France to such a state as to meet her vast expen-

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diture: for this end he endeavored to enforce a strict system of economy, and to revive M. Turgot's plan of provincial administrations; but the higher classes were too depraved to assist him in any public-spirited measures, and Neckar was soon afterwards compelled to retire.

Reverses.

Intelligence of events from the theatre of war did not tend to diminish the public odium now gathering round the British cabinet. The marquis de Bouillé, after the reconquest of St. Eustace, and preparations made for that of Demerara and Issequibo, proceeded to attack St. Christopher's where he landed 8000 men, protected by thirty-two sail of the line under de Grasse; and though sir Samuel Hood, with great skill and address, succeeded, with only twenty-two line-of-battle ships, to lure the French admiral from the coast; and, by placing himself in the vacant situation, to cut off his communication with the army; yet the island surrendered to the menaces of the French general, who threatened to burn the plantations, and renew the devastation which had been committed at Tobago. Admiral Hood preserved his squadron by slipping cables in the night, and getting silently under weigh. Nevis and Montserrat being soon afterwards reduced, Barbadoes and Antigua were now the only leeward islands that remained to Great Britain: nor was it long before public dissatisfaction was still farther increased by the loss of Minorca, after one of the most heroic defences recorded in history, by a garrison which did not exceed half the number required for its works; being, through famine and sickness, reduced to 600 effective men.

Vigorous
opposition
to minis-
ters.

During the recess, opponents of administration had been employed in forming and maturing a general plan of attack; the chief conduct of which was entrusted to Mr. Fox, whose genius was most effectively displayed, not in devising large and beneficial plans of executive policy, but in reprehensive eloquence, and opposition to the measures of his political antagonists. 'This session, however,' says Mr. Nicholls, 'was his glorious campaign: his health was intire;

his troops followed him with confidence; he felt that he gained ground on every debate; and

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His spirit lent a fire
Ev'n to the meanest peasant in the camp.'

The contest was opened by a motion of Fox, for a committee to inquire into the causes of that want of success which had attended our fleets during the war, more especially in the year 1781. This inquiry, it was stated, would resolve itself into two distinct parts; whether the first lord of the admiralty had the means of procuring a navy equal to the exigences of the state; and whether he employed the force which he really possessed with wisdom and ability. After a partial defence of the navy by captain Luttrell, and a general exculpation of the earl of Sandwich by lord Mulgrave, who contended that he had acted according to received information, moral probability, and existing circumstances, the motion passed without a division; lord North declaring that the first lord of the admiralty was no less anxious than himself for a complete investigation of the subject; according to the custom of all public defaulters ever since a parliament was instituted. Several animated debates took place respecting the papers to be produced; and when lords North and Mulgrave objected to the disclosure of some letters and other documents, a suggestion of Mr. Pitt was adopted, that the substance only of such communications should be laid before the house; after which, debates were postponed till the seventh of February.

On that day, Mr. Fox, in a long and able speech, brought forward five charges against the board of admiralty: first, that de Grasse was suffered to depart for the West Indies without any effort to intercept his fleet: the second charge alluded to transactions at St. Eustace, and the loss of our convoy sent home with the booty, which might have been saved by a squadron sent out at the time it was expected: the third was on account of a letter sent by the admiralty to the Bristol merchants; misleading them with regard to the pre-

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sence of a French fleet in the channel, and thereby endangering the trade of their port: the fourth charge related to forces sent to cope with the Dutch; and the fifth to the very inadequate fleet sent out with admiral Kempenfeldt. He concluded by moving that 'there had been gross mismanagement in the administration of naval affairs during the year 1781.' Mr. Pitt supported this resolution; but would have preferred a motion for the removal of lord Sandwich, to whom he imputed all our naval disasters and disgraces. Though the rejection of Mr. Fox's motion showed the great difficulty of fixing any responsibility on ministers, under the existing system of parliamentary representation; yet a majority of only twenty-two, in a house of 388 members, was sufficiently discouraging to the present cabinet. Some motions in the house of lords respecting the execution of colonel Haynes, and the surrender of York-town, caused fierce debates, and severe attacks on several characters concerned; but no measure occasioned fiercer opposition than that of raising lord George Germaine to the peerage. Disagreeing with the other members of administration respecting the future conduct of the war, his lordship had resigned his office to Mr. Welbore Ellis; and the title of viscount Sackville was destined for him by the king, as a reward for his uncompromising opposition to American independence, and his resolute support of his majesty's own sentiments. On the bare report that this mark of royal favor was intended, a resolution was proposed by the marquis of Carmarthen, that 'it was derogatory to the honor of the house of lords that any person laboring under so heavy a sentence of a court-martial should be recommended to the crown as worthy of a peerage:' but after several violent speeches had been made, reflecting on the character of lord George, and threatening him with impeachment, a motion of adjournment was carried by a large majority. When the new-made peer took his seat, the debate was renewed, and his lordship defended himself with great spirit and dignity; but was unable to prevent the insertion of a protest on the journals, signed

by nine peers, repeating the motion, sentence, and public orders: it also declared, 'that the elevation of lord Sackville was a measure fatal to the interests and glory of the crown, as well as to the dignity of parliament; an insult on the memory of the late sovereign, and every surviving branch of the illustrious house of Brunswick:' yet it would be very hard, if the reigning monarch were prohibited from revising the acts of a predecessor; especially those, in which clamor and prejudice may be suspected to have had some influence.

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These personal attacks were preparatory to a general assault, which was conducted with much ability and perseverance, and was finally crowned with success. On the twenty-second of February, Mr. Fox renewed his motion against the admiralty which had been lost in a committee; being ably seconded by Mr. Pitt, who went through an accurate detail of naval events in the preceding year, and commented on each with remarkable acuteness and force. Mr. Dunning declared, that the speech which he made on this occasion, was 'the bursting forth of a torrent of eloquence from the greatest prodigy that perhaps ever was seen in this or any other country;—an honorable gentleman, possessing the full vigor of youth, united with the experience and wisdom of maturest age.'⁵ When the house divided, the majority for ministers decreased,⁶ though the members present were more numerous than on the former occasion.

Encouraged by this progressive decline of ministerial influence, general Conway moved a resolution for an address to the king, imploring him to put an end to the American war; and promising assistance in effecting a happy reconciliation with the revolted colonies. After each side had repeated arguments often employed, ministers were so far deserted by the country gentlemen, as to be left in a majority of one; the numbers being, for the motion 193, against it 194.

⁵ Dr. Tomline's Life of Pitt, vol. i. p. 53.
⁶ 236 to 237.

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Fully confident of success, general Conway, on the twenty-seventh of February, moved a resolution against the farther continuance of hostilities, in terms as near to the former as the rules of the house would permit. When lord North obtained a hearing, he declared, that if the confidence of parliament should be withdrawn from him, it would be his duty to resign: he admitted the motion to be constitutional; but wished for a short delay, to convince the house that ministers were sincere in their intention of not recruiting the army in America. Mr. Wallace, attorney-general, endeavored to parry the blow, by stating his intention to bring in a bill which would enable ministers to treat on a basis of a truce; for which reason he moved an adjournment of the debate. On this proposition, Mr. Pitt was particularly severe; and on the ground of lord North's own declaration, he urged the house, by every consideration of duty and prudence, to withdraw its confidence from the present cabinet. 'Was there a promise,' he asked, 'which they had not falsified? was there a plan in which they agreed? No; there was an incessant variation: a shuffling and tricking pervaded their whole conduct; and in them parliament could place no trust.'

The question of adjournment was carried against ministers by a majority of nineteen; and the original motion passed without a division. General Conway followed up his victory by procuring an address to the throne for peace with America; which was presented two days afterwards by the whole house: still ministers made an effort to arrest their fall, by putting a general and evasive answer into the mouth of the king; but their opponents had become too powerful. Conway moved a second address, thanking his majesty for his reply to the first; yet again urging the specific object of the petition: at the same time he proposed a resolution that the house would consider as enemies to the sovereign and the country all who should recommend or attempt to prosecute offensive warfare with the colonies: and both these motions were carried without a division, by a parliament, which in the preceding

November had promised to his majesty their firm support in prosecuting the war. As lord North still lingered in office, his opponents, led by Mr. Fox, pressed their attacks yet farther: they were indeed defeated on two motions made by lord John Cavendish and sir John Rous, for a change of ministry; but the small majorities against them led only to an assurance of ultimate success. Mr. Pitt spoke very vehemently on these occasions; severely reprobating a proposition made by lord North for a coalition of parties, and declaring that his administration had been one of influence and intrigue, while it was generally acknowledged that he and his colleagues were unfit for the purposes of government: they were men who had neither sensibility nor shame; but were void of feeling, and all other valuable qualities which constitute the great statesman and powerful minister: while the last division on the fifteenth of March was taking place, Mr. Fox gave notice that a similar motion would be made the Wednesday following. On that day an unusual number of members, and a vast crowd of strangers, attended; but when lord Surrey rose to make the promised motion, lord North suddenly announced to the house that the cabinet was dissolved: he thanked the commons for that long support with which they had honored him; asserted his constant desire of contributing to the welfare of his country; and promised that he would not shrink from any inquiry into his official conduct. On this occasion, he received various compliments, as might have been expected, from his adherents; while the exultation manifested by several of his opponents called forth animadversions from a generous adversary,⁷ who strongly exhorted his associates to guard against those passions which distort the human mind: he also pointed out the great expectations which their own declarations intitled the nation to form, and the difficult task which they had bound themselves to accomplish.

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Resignation of lord North.

The new ministerial arrangements required time

⁷ Mr. Burke.

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Rocking-
ham admi-
nistration.

for serious consideration. The opposition consisted principally of two distinct and powerful parties, at the head of which, respectively, were the marquis of Rockingham and the earl of Shelburne: the former of these noblemen contended for a complete emancipation of the American colonies; while the latter, though opposed to the principle of taxation and continuance of hostilities, adhered to the opinion of lord Chatham regarding their independence. As lord Shelburne's sentiments on this point were in unison with those of the king, his majesty naturally looked to him as the successor of his late minister: accordingly, the day after lord North had announced his resignation, the first post was offered to him: lord Shelburne, however, assured his majesty, 'that in his judgment no one could at present fill that situation except lord Rockingham.'⁸

Under these circumstances, a negotiation was set on foot with the marquis, whose appointment was soon afterwards announced,⁹ with earl Shelburne and Mr. Fox as secretaries of state: lord Camden was made president of the council, and the duke of Grafton keeper of the privy seal: admiral Keppel, created a viscount, became first lord of the admiralty; lord John Cavendish, chancellor of the exchequer; general Conway, commander in chief; Mr. Dunning, created lord Ashburton, chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster; and the duke of Richmond, master general of the ordnance, with a blue riband: lord Thurlow retained the great seal.

⁸ Dr. Tomline's Life of Pitt, vol. i. p. 64, note.

⁹ 'When lord Rockingham,' says Mr. Nicholls, 'had signified his acceptance of it, the king appointed so distant a time for receiving him, that three intire days elapsed before his majesty saw his new minister. By this treatment his majesty expressed the sentiments he entertained for him. The cabinet was composed of eleven; five Rockinghams, and five Shelburnes; the king retaining one, lord Thurlow.'—Recollections, vol. i. p. 45. In a letter to lord North, on the 17th of March, after Conway's motion was carried, the king says, 'I am resolved not to throw myself into the hands of opposition, at all events; and shall certainly, if things go as they seem to tend, know what my conscience as well as honor dictates, as the only way left for me.' On the 19th of the same month, he says, 'I cannot but be hurt at lord North's letter of last night. Every man must be the sole judge of his feelings; therefore, whatever you, or any other man can say, has no effect with me.' In the course of two or three days, however, he speaks of 'those who are to form an administration;' and on the 27th he writes a letter full of strong emotion, and some affection, to lord North, announcing, that 'the fatal day is come;' and bitterly complaining of the terms imposed on him.—Extracts, &c.

Other departments of state were filled by persons eminent for rank or talent. The duke of Portland went out as lord lieutenant to Ireland; Mr. Burke became paymaster of the forces; Mr. T. Townshend and colonel Barré secretary at war and treasurer of the navy; Mr. Sheridan under-secretary of state; lord Howe, created a viscount, was appointed to command the grand fleet; Mr. Kenyon and Mr. John Lee were made attorney and solicitor-general; while sir Fletcher Norton was raised to the peerage, under the title of lord Grantly.¹⁰

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In the late important debates, Mr. Pitt had taken a conspicuous part, and had spoken with immense applause: the abilities which he possessed had been discovered by all, while the influence which he was likely to obtain in the councils of his country, was noted by a few, who adopted early means of securing his regard. Various situations were offered to him in the new ministry, and among others, that of vice-treasurer for Ireland; though aristocratic pride refused to him, as well as to Mr. Burke, a place of power and responsibility commensurate with his extraordinary talents; so he rejected any situation which should pledge him to measures, without giving him a seat in the cabinet. Besides, it is probable that his acuteness led him to foresee the speedy dissolution of an administration, which was composed of heterogeneous materials, without any fixed principles of union: it was sufficient for Pitt, that he participated in that popularity which Fox and his adherents had procured by their late spirited exertions in parliament: it is a proof of his profound sagacity, that he was the only person who by it obtained any great and permanent advantage.

Fox, though not nominally the head, was generally

¹⁰ 'He had never done the party any service,' says Mr. Nicholls; 'but was recommended by lord Rockingham, in order that he might appear to have equal influence with the earl of Shelburne, who had procured the elevation of Mr. Dunning. The king had discernment enough to perceive the motive, and asked if it was his lordship's particular wish: lord Rockingham declined answering in the affirmative; but said, he thought sir Fletcher Norton ought to be made a peer. He accordingly was made, and voted against the Rockinghams in the ensuing session.'—Recollections, vol. i. p. 47.

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regarded as the principal person in this administration. Inferior to his political tutor and friend, in commanding eloquence and political wisdom, he excelled him in vigor of debate, in the advantages of birth and connexion, in the art of suiting his doctrines and manners to the taste of the people, and in that tact which is necessary to fix a man at the head of a political party: his unbounded popularity in the country, and the aristocratic feeling in his favor, gave him more weight than the highest official dignity could impart. Burke, as his biographer justly asserts, considered humility in the estimate of ourselves a species of moral duty, and submitted to the ingratitude of his party without a murmur:¹¹ he neither resented his exclusion from the cabinet like a vain man, nor complained of it like a weak one; but yielded with a good grace; and took the office allotted to him, with the honorable design of purifying it from the corruption by which it was disgraced.

‘Every day,’ says Mr. Nicholls,¹² ‘brought forth a new proof of that hatred, which the parties composing this administration bore toward each other: the Rockinghams abused lord Shelburne for want of good faith; and the reply of the Shelburnes was, that they were in no way pledged to lord Rockingham.’ Mr. Fox, while speaking in terms of affectionate veneration for lord Rockingham, described lord Shelburne’s character as the exact reverse;¹³ and declared, that his repugnance to be associated in office with him and lord Thurlow,¹⁴ who was particularly odious to every member of the cabinet, yielded only to that satisfactory pledge for the integrity of administration, which was afforded by the ascendancy of the marquis.

The principal measures agreed on by the members of this cabinet before their accession to power, were the offer of peace to America on the basis of its inde-

¹¹ Prior’s *Life of Burke*, vol. i. p. 403.

¹² *Recollections*, vol. i. p. 47.

¹³ *Adolphus*, vol. iii. p. 407.

¹⁴ ‘Lord Thurlow,’ says Mr. Adolphus, ‘by a long course of contest in both houses, had attracted peculiar dislike; and from his manly, unbending temper, the ministers expected impediment rather than support.’—*History*, vol. iii. p. 407.

pendence; the promotion of economy; and the diminution of influence over both branches of the legislature. Before all things, however, the affairs of Ireland were found to require attention.

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When military associations had been formed throughout that country, a tendency toward union among all parties, for the redress of grievances, speedily appeared: they now began to assemble in large bodies for reviews; by which means they displayed their strength, acquired confidence in themselves, and were led to communicate and co-operate with each other for political purposes. One great object of the government of lord Carlisle, who succeeded the earl of Buckinghamshire in 1780, was to repress the spirit of this system, which had been encouraged by the imbecility of his predecessor; but he only excited that spirit to new and more energetic exertions. On the thirteenth of November, 1781, Mr. Grattan, in pursuance of popular instructions, offered to the house of commons a bill to explain, amend, and limit the mutiny act: his motion was rejected, but renewed early in December by lord Arran, and evaded by a motion of delay for six months. As soon, however, as the armed people of Ireland saw their representatives beginning to resume their former tone, in negating proposals for the establishment of a free constitution, they determined to rely on themselves for the realisation of their wishes; on the thirteenth of February, 1782, the memorable convention took place at Dungannon; in which the delegates of the volunteer associations, assuming a deliberative character, framed a decisive exposition of the demands of Ireland, and led to the establishment of her legislative independence.

Affairs of
Ireland.

The resolutions of this body affected to adjust many important points of government, especially the claim of any other power except the king, lords, and commons of Ireland, to legislate for that kingdom; the powers of the privy council in each country; various obstructions to trade, not established by the Irish parliament; a limitation of the mutiny bill, the independence of

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the judges, and an impartial administration of justice. In their determination to seek redress, they pledged themselves to support no candidate at any election, who refused to support their resolutions; resolved that the right of private judgment in religious matters was sacred in all; and therefore, as christians and protestants, they rejoiced in the relaxation of penal laws against the papists, which took place in 1780, as tending to the union and prosperity of Ireland: they also made arrangements for future meetings, appointed a committee, and voted an address of thanks to the minority in the Irish parliament, for their noble, though ineffectual efforts, in favor of great commercial and constitutional rights.

Deriving new hopes from these demonstrations of spirit, Mr. Grattan moved an address to the king, asserting the right of Ireland to an independent legislature: but his motion was rejected; as was another for a bill to quiet the proprietors of estates in Ireland under acts of the British parliament: as this measure tended also to affirm that Great Britain had no right to legislate for Ireland, Mr. Yelverton, pursuing a middle course, carried a bill for making several laws, enacted in Great Britain, and affecting Ireland, acts of the Irish parliament. At this period, the disasters of a war, which by embarrassing the trade of Ireland led to its struggle for independence, at length displaced the British ministers, and substituted in their stead the leaders of a party, which in opposition had always advocated the cause of freedom.

On the meeting of the English parliament after the Easter recess, Mr. Luttrell introduced the subject of Irish discontent; and required from Mr. Eden, who had been secretary under lord Carlisle, some explanation of the affairs of that kingdom. Mr. Eden readily obeyed the call; and, after describing the conduct of government and of opposition during the last two years, insisted that the declaration of rights, so unanimously cherished, could no longer be opposed with success; nor did he think that the Irish would abuse the advantages they might obtain, or adopt

measures injurious to England, while his majesty retained the power of sanctioning all their acts: beside the declaration of rights, Ireland had called, through its volunteers, for a habeas corpus, and obtained it: a bill for the permanent commission of judges was in progress through parliament; the required alteration of the mutiny act might be granted; and a modification of Poyning's law, which would satisfy the people, could not be dangerous to England. He then moved for leave to bring in a bill, 'repealing so much of the act of the sixth of George I. as asserted that the king and parliament of Great Britain had a right to make laws binding the kingdom and people of Ireland.'

This motion was seconded with great animation; but Mr. Fox, when in place, had not exactly the same sentiments as when out of place: after declaiming with indignation against indecent haste in bringing forward such a measure, and abusing the late ministry for not acceding to moderate requests, which would have prevented these haughty claims, he prevailed on Mr. Eden to withdraw his motion: next day, a message from the king was submitted to parliament, expressing concern at the discontent and claims of Ireland, and exhorting the house to take measures for a satisfactory adjustment of them. In moving the address on this message, Mr. Fox, though he announced the resolution of ministers to act effectually, deprecated the hasty step of Mr. Eden, and required time for collecting information, and for deliberation on the course to be pursued. His speech, as well as that of lord Shelburne in the upper house, was involved in studied mystery; though it plainly appeared from Fox's observations, that the large concessions recommended by Mr. Eden were not to be contemplated.

In the midst of this hesitation, Mr. Grattan, in the Irish parliament, moved his celebrated address to the throne, containing a full and explicit declaration of the rights of Ireland. In the best style of Irish eloquence, he declared 'that he remembered Ireland when she was a child; he had beheld her progress from injuries

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to arms, from arms to liberty: the Irish were no longer afraid of the French, nor of any nation, nor of any minister. If men turned their eyes to the rest of Europe, they would find the ancient spirit expired, liberty ceded, or empire lost; nations subsisting on the memory of past glory, and guarded by mercenary armies: but Ireland, quitting such examples, had become a model to them; she had excelled modern, and equalled ancient Europe. The meeting of the delegates at Dungannon was a great event; and, like all original measures, matter of surprise till it became matter of admiration: he compared it to the English convention parliament, or the assembly of barons at Runnymede: all were original transactions, not flowing from precedent, but containing in themselves precedent and principle: every great constitutional question would have been lost, the public would have been lost, had they depended only on parliament; but they had fallen into the hands of the people, and by the people they would be preserved: the Irish volunteers were associated for the preservation of the laws; but the claims of the British parliament were subversive of all law: the volunteers had supported the rights of the Irish parliament against those temporary trustees who would have relinquished them; but England had no reason to fear the Irish volunteers; they would die for England and her majestic race of men. Allied by liberty as well as allegiance, the two nations formed a constitutional confederacy: the perpetual annexation of the crown was one great bond, but liberty was a still greater: it would be easy to find a king, but impossible for Ireland to find a nation which could communicate to them a great charter, save only England. This made England a natural connexion; and every true Irishman would exclaim,—‘Liberty with England; but, at all events, liberty.’

The motion was carried without a division. In the British parliament Mr. Fox no longer hesitated; but, having expatiated in a committee of the whole house on the claims of Ireland, he allowed them to be founded on justice, and such as he, when out of office,

had always maintained. Ireland had clearly stated her wants; and, though he might have preferred a different method of asking, he would meet her on her own terms; and he concluded by moving 'for an act repealing that of the sixth of George I. securing the dependence of Ireland.¹⁵ Mr. Thomas Pitt seconded the motion, which passed without a division; lord Beauchamp alone expressing a doubt, whether the repeal, leaving the question of right undecided, would satisfy the Irish nation. For Grattan's instrumentality in procuring this great concession, addresses were presented to him from various public bodies: he was styled the savior of his country: and the Irish parliament voted £50,000 to purchase a house and lands for him and his heirs, as a testimony of national gratitude.

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Among other popular measures now brought forward with success, was the bill for excluding contractors from sitting in the house of commons; and also that for disqualifying revenue officers from voting in parliamentary elections: a rider was added to the latter in the lower house, which exempted from its operation those who held places for life; and in the upper house lord Mansfield made a very able speech against the principle of the bill. The marquis of Rockingham, however, declared that his situation as first lord of the treasury would be extremely uneasy if it were rejected: in seventy boroughs the election depended chiefly on officers of the revenue: nearly 12,000 of these persons, created by the late administration, possessed votes in other places; and he could not without remorse subject them, through his influence, to the necessity, or at least the imputation, of voting against the dictates of gratitude and conscience. This curious argument terminated the debate, and the bill passed.

Bill re-
garding
contract-
ors, &c.

The right of free election was strengthened by the success of Wilkes, who renewed his motion for ex-

Resolutions
respecting
Wilkes

¹⁵ That act declared that Ireland was inseparably annexed to the crown of Great Britain, and bound by British acts of parliament, if named; that the Irish house of lords had no jurisdiction in matters of appeal; and that the *dernier resort* in all cases of law and equity was to the peers of Great Britain."

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expunged
from the
journals.

punging from the journals of parliament its resolutions concerning the celebrated Middlesex election. Mr. Fox, the man of the people, resisted this measure, on the principle that a house of commons ought, for the advantage of the people, to have the privilege of expelling those whom they, as representatives, thought unworthy of a seat; which privilege was too valuable to be surrendered. Elated with this triumph, Wilkes published a letter expressive of delight, in which few persons now participated: every constitutional question, for which such an instrument as Wilkes was requisite, had been long settled: and the instrument itself was cast aside as a worthless thing.

Disfranchisement
of Cricklade.

The purity of the elective branch of our constitution was promoted by an act which passed by large majorities, for disfranchising many corrupt voters of the borough of Cricklade, and extending the right of suffrage to freeholders of the hundred. In the progress of this bill through the upper house, it was strongly opposed by lords Thurlow, Mansfield, and Loughborough; being ably supported by lords Grantly and Ashburton; but more especially by the duke of Richmond. In the course of debate, his grace reproached the lord chancellor, not without justice, for resisting indiscriminately every measure of improvement or regulation: lord Fortescue lamented the condition of the house of peers, lowered and tarnished as it was by a redundancy of lawyers, who sacrificed all the solid, honorable principles of truth and justice to pettifogging chicanery, and the wretched quibbles of Westminster Hall: evidence was called, and counsel heard against the bill; when the duke of Richmond again gave vent to his indignation against the legal phalanx; and being 'beset by lawyers above the bar, and interrupted by lawyers below the bar,' he called in counsel for his own assistance. Through the influence of lord Shelburne, another important and beneficial law was enacted, by which the holders of patent places in the colonies were compelled to reside and execute the duties of their several offices.

During the administration of lord North, frequent

complaints had been made that the people of England were very imperfectly represented in the house of commons; and associations had been formed for the purpose of obtaining a reform in parliament. It was urged that the counties sent a very inadequate number of representatives; and that numerous small boroughs, with two members, were under corrupt and disgraceful influence: the septennial act also was declared to be one which impaired the connexion between the people and their representatives, while it exposed parliament to the utmost corruption. All this was said to require correction, as a gross departure from the original principles of our constitution; and the freedom of political thought which now prevailed, was considered highly favorable to a discussion of the subject.

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Debates
on parlia-
mentary
reform.

Mr. Pitt was fixed on as the fittest person to introduce the motion, which, from its delicacy and importance, required no ordinary qualifications: on the seventh of May therefore, when a call of the house had taken place, he brought forward this interesting question in a very able speech. After apologising for undertaking a task which required much greater ability and experience than he possessed, he went on to observe, that the most enlightened men, and among others his own father, who was not apt to indulge in vague speculations, had maintained the necessity of a calm revision of the principles of our constitution, and of a moderate but substantial reform of those defects, which had gradually and imperceptibly stolen in to deface, and were threatening to destroy, the most beautiful fabric of government on earth. He spoke with great severity of that corrupt influence which had caused a perseverance in the American war, contrary to the sense of the people; and praised the patriotic conduct of the present government. He contended that the present state of our house of commons was totally different from its original construction; the members in general being more influenced by the crown and aristocracy, than by the opinions and wishes of the people: many members were chosen by boroughs, which possessed no one quality of representation, not

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even that of population: their votes were constantly brought to market; and by means of them it was, that the nabob of Arcot had seven or eight members in the house. Such places ought to be disfranchised or reformed, and an addition made to county representatives. He requested that the house would permit this important subject to be investigated by a committee, with a view to moderate reform. Mr. Sawbridge, in seconding the motion, spoke of Mr. Pitt's speech as displaying great and astonishing ability: but though supported by Mr. Fox and some other official persons, it was thrown out by a small majority: its principal opponents were Mr. Thomas Pitt, who, as proprietor of Old Sarum, ridiculed the idea of equal representation; Mr. Powys, who could not see the least utility in the revisal of a system which had stood the test of ages; and Mr. Dundas, who, like all persons who profit by corruption, thought that the inquiry promised no benefit, and might lead to evil: it was, perhaps, wiser to submit to certain irregularities in an established form of government, than by attempting their correction to hazard the safety of the whole fabric: a practice may prevail, indefensible in theory, and irreconcilable with the original design of an institution; which yet, from the changes to which time subjects every community, may be far from mischievous, nay, even beneficial in its effects. While the opinions of younger men were in favor of this question, the older statesmen generally deprecated its agitation; for sentiments had already begun to be entertained and inculcated in certain classes respecting government, very different from those of its supporters; and doctrines, tending to diminish veneration for our constitutional establishments, were published by persons of considerable name and authority, which spread rapidly among their adherents.

A secret committee had been appointed to investigate the abuses of our Indian government; and when several reports had been presented to the house, Mr. Dundas reviewed the state of the company and its servants with great perspicuity and ability; severely

reprobating that spirit of ambition, which provoked the native powers, from hopes of profiting by their conquests; that perfidy, which produced violations of treaty; that prodigality, which had reduced the company to such embarrassment and distress; and that general system of misgovernment, which had seriously injured all our Asiatic establishments. Several resolutions were passed, stating instances of gross misconduct: a bill of pains and penalties was carried against sir Thomas Rumbold, for high crimes and misdemeanors committed in the Carnatic; a vote of censure was passed on Warren Hastings, and William Hornsby, esq., president of Bombay, the recall of whom was recommended to the directors: while an address was voted to his majesty, praying for the removal of sir Elijah Impey from the office of chief justice in Bengal.

On the seventeenth of May, alderman Sawbridge renewed his annual attempt to shorten the duration of parliaments; which, though supported by Mr. Pitt, was rejected by the usual majority: lord Mahon also introduced, without success, a bill to prevent bribery and expenses at elections; which also was powerfully supported by Mr. Pitt, but opposed by Mr. Fox: and this was the first time these great men differed from each other on a political question, before that disagreement took place which ended in their final separation: the conduct of ministry on the subject of parliamentary reform began to be considered by the public as suspicious, if not treacherous. Mr. Fox, at a subsequent period, took pains to justify himself on this point; professing warmly his own attachment to the cause, while he acknowledged the antipathy with which some of his colleagues, particularly Mr. Burke and Mr. Thomas Townshend, viewed it: the scheme, however, of ministerial economy was introduced with more sincerity and effect: on the fifteenth of April, a royal message was brought to the house, recommending the adoption of a plan for the curtailment of expenses throughout all the branches of public expenditure; and this was speedily followed by another, requesting the discharge of arrears on the civil list,

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which amounted to about £296,000. The house voted the requisite sum; and the savings intended to be made by the reform bill were mortgaged for its payment: but even here the anticipations of the public were considerably disappointed; and the sickle of retrenchment failed to reap that golden harvest, the prospect of which was so alluring. Many branches of expenditure were left untouched, and many appointments were retained which had been formerly represented as unnecessary and injurious; so that the principal reform was confined to Mr. Burke's own department, in which, though the bill was introduced by him, he effected a saving of £47,000 per annum, nearly half of which was the exclusive profit of the paymaster himself: the whole annual sum reduced amounted to £72,368. As Mr. Burke was a poor man, without any prospect of a secure income, his disinterested conduct appears in a very splendid point of view.

Proposals
for peace
with Hol-
land.

While such measures were proceeding in the senate, Fox employed his talents as a minister, in offering to Holland a renewal of amity on the terms of the treaty of 1674; and to effect so desirable an object, he proposed that hostilities should be immediately suspended: this proposal was made through the Russian minister; but was very coldly received by the states-general, which were not disposed to treat separately from their allies: he also made overtures of peace to the colonies; for which there was a general impatience in England, founded on despair of success in the principal object of the war. Soon after his appointment, he proposed to recognise the independence of the United States unconditionally, and not to reserve it as a term of peace: Mr. Grenville was sent to Paris, on the first of May, to ascertain the sentiments of the American commissioners there, and to open a direct negotiation with M. de Vergennes;¹⁶ while lord Shelburne officially wrote to the commander

¹⁶ At the same time lord Shelburne despatched Mr. Oswald on a similar commission;—a proceeding, which was viewed with jealousy and displeasure, and as an overweening contention for power, by the Rockingham party.

in chief in America to communicate the resolution of the British cabinet and of parliament to congress: that body however was found averse to entering on a separate negotiation; though its determination could not be made known to the present ministry before its dissolution by the death of its leader.

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The state of feeling at this time toward Great Britain, among the selfish powers of Europe, may be estimated generally from that manifested by the court of St. Petersburg; whose sentiments were duly indicated to the British cabinet by our envoy, in a despatch dated January 22nd; which must have arrived in time to influence lord North, if he required any such stimulus, to resign a post so long retained against the dictates of his conscience and his judgment. 'I fear,' says sir James Harris to lord Stormont, 'I shall not be able to convey through any private channel to her imperial majesty, either any reflections on the present situation of affairs, or the important intelligence your lordship transmits to me. *I have no one on whom I can rely*; and since the alteration in my friend's sentiments is become more manifest, I am forsaken by many dependants and hangers-on, who, by obliging me, thought they were obliging him. All these, by a transition natural to such characters, are now gone over to the opposite side. The empress, too, having intirely withdrawn all her distinctions from me, no one chooses to speak to her either about me, or in my name; and those who formerly were accustomed to mention me favorably, think they gratify her by depreciating and sinking me in her opinion. I therefore am not only in a situation perfectly isolated, but stand exposed to all the malevolence of personal animosity, directed by powerful and vindictive enemies, thoroughly versed in court intrigue, and whose unfriendly dispositions toward my court are, I am sure, increased from the ill-will they bear me. These never will suffer me to obtain that reputation, which success in my negotiations would give me; and will spare no pains to bring down on me that discredit and disgrace which generally attend him who fails in what he

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undertakes.¹⁷ Such was the result of all the mean compliances made by our ministers, and all the petty arts of diplomacy used by their envoy: let its record stand as a monument of shame to them; and of caution to succeeding administrations; while the event about to be described, shows how the pride of our inveterate foes is to be lowered, and the necessity of disgraceful or compulsory concessions averted.

After the conquest of all our Leeward islands, except Barbadoes and Antigua, the fleets of France and Spain projected an expedition against Jamaica; and for this the reinforcement had been despatched under de Guichen, which Kempenfeldt was unable wholly to intercept. Ministers were blamed at the time for permitting sir G. Rodney to sail directly for the West Indies, instead of employing him conjointly with admiral Kempenfeldt; but it appeared afterwards that they had judged wisely in disregarding this precarious advantage, for the sake of securing the junction of Rodney and Hood, and preserving our remaining possessions in the western sea. Rodney hoped, by his early arrival at Barbadoes, to prevent the fall of St. Christopher's; but meeting with sir Samuel Hood, who informed him of its surrender, and the retreat of de Grasse to Martinique, he sailed thither; when, after long watching the motions of the French fleet, to prevent its junction with the Spaniards, he succeeded in bringing on a partial action off Guadaloupe: such however was the state of the wind, that only the van of the British was engaged; most of the other ships being becalmed under the high lands of Dominica. In the course, however, of the next two days, the enemy, by dint of great efforts, kept far to windward; and would probably have escaped, had they not been brought down, on the eleventh of April, to save one

¹⁷ A few months later sir James thus writes:—"In regard to favorable impressions to be made here through the medium of foreign courts, I can only say, that the influence of Prussia has done us infinite harm; and that the influence of Austria has never done us any good. One of my chief pursuits for a while was, to diminish the one and increase the other; and it has been one of my chief concerns to observe, that, though I was sufficiently successful in my efforts, I brought down a great deal of ill-will on myself without obtaining a single advantage for my court."—*Diaries, &c.*, vol. i. p. 506.

of their ships, which had dropped to leeward in a crippled state, from running foul of the French admiral. By this casualty Rodney found himself in a situation to weather a large part of the opposing squadron, which was now reduced to thirty ships; two having been disabled in the previous action.

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By daybreak on the twelfth, the line of battle was formed in an incredibly short time, and at the distance of one cable's length between each ship; the officers of the fleet having acquired great experience in naval evolutions during the last two years on this station.¹⁸ As the signal was given for close contest, the ships came up separately, and ranged themselves against their opponents, passing along the enemy for that purpose; while they gave and received a tremendous fire: after some time spent in a vigorous and destructive conflict, during which victory was long held in suspense, the British admiral executed a manœuvre, which had never before been practised in naval tactics.¹⁹ In his own ship, the *Formidable*, supported by the *Namur*, the *Duke*, and the *Canada*, he bore down, with all sail set, on the enemy's line, within three ships of the centre; and succeeded in breaking through it in a masterly style. 'In the act of doing so,' says sir Gilbert Blane, 'we passed within pistol-shot of the *Glorieux*, which was so terribly handled, that, being shorn of all her masts, bowsprit, and ensign-staff, but with the white flag nailed to a stump, and breathing defiance, as it were, in her last moments, she lay a motionless hulk, presenting a spectacle, which struck our admiral's fancy as not unlike the remains of a fallen hero: being an indefatigable reader of Homer,

Victory of
Rodney.

¹⁸ Life of Rodney, vol. ii. p. 228. His despatches to the admiralty after this battle tell a very different tale of his officers, from that which was told after the previous engagement. 'I want words,' he says, 'to express how sensible I am of the meritorious conduct of all the captains, officers, and men, who had a share in this glorious victory.'

¹⁹ Much has been said and written about the credit due to Rodney for the invention and execution of this manœuvre of breaking the enemy's line; and doubts have arisen whether it was the effect of design on the present occasion. Though it may be described in the tactics of Clerk, it was expressly treated of by Père Hoste in 1688, who has written the best work extant on naval tactics. The manœuvre was frequently practised in the Dutch wars. Whether it was designed by Rodney, or suggested to him by another, he has the credit of executing it; and, what is still greater, of training his fleet to the power of executing it.

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he exclaimed,—‘now was to be the contest for the body of Patroclus.’

As soon as he had accomplished this manœuvre, the rest of his division followed him, wore round, and doubled on the enemy; thus placing between two fires those ships which this skilful action had separated from the others: as soon as Rodney and the vessels with him wore, he made a signal for the van to tack, by which they gained the wind of the French, and completed their confusion; when a total rout ensued, and victory was no longer doubtful. The loss of the enemy amounted to eight ships: one had been sunk, another blew up after she had been taken, and six remained in possession of the conquerors: among these was the admiral's own ship, the *Ville de Paris*, of 106 guns, and the only first-rate man-of-war that had ever been taken into port by any commander of any nation: she was a present to Louis XV. from the city of Paris, and is said to have cost £176,000. The intelligence of these events excited great exultation at home: sir George Rodney received the unanimous thanks of parliament, with a peerage, to which a pension of £2000 was added, to descend to his heirs for ever.

The loss of men sustained by the British fleet in the actions of the ninth and twelfth of April amounted only to 237 killed and 760 wounded; while that of the French, whose ships were crowded with soldiers, was computed at 3000 slain and 6000 wounded: those vessels that escaped were reduced almost to wrecks: sir Samuel Hood afterwards captured the *Jason* and *Caton*, of seventy-four guns each, with two frigates, between *Hispaniola* and *Porto Rico*; while Rodney returned to *Jamaica*, where he was hailed with joyful acclamations as a deliverer.²⁰ But it was in England where his glorious victory made the greatest impression, and his name resounded from one end of the kingdom to the other; for the people, dispirited by the successes of the enemy, could scarcely divest

²⁰ Blame has been attached to Rodney for not following up his victory with sufficient vigor and promptitude. On this point an important document was found among his papers, after his death; giving his reasons for not pursuing the enemy. —See his *Life*, vol. ii. p. 218.

themselves of fear lest they should be repeated; and nothing could exceed their indignation, when informed that measures had been taken by the new administration to deprive their favorite admiral of his command on that station, where he had been so long toiling to uphold the interests of his country, and restore the tarnished honor of the British flag.

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Meanwhile the negotiation for peace proceeded with discouraging slowness: prince Kaunitz spoke haughtily of contempt shown to the mediating powers in the commencement of a direct negotiation; but refused to admit that France was equally blamable for accepting, as England for making, such overtures; nor did he express any satisfaction at the late glorious victory: if jealousy of the naval power of Great Britain occasioned this feeling, ministers took the best course to remove it, by promptly declaring that the event made no alteration in their desire for peace, or in the terms proposed as a basis. France, however, still placed so much reliance on preparations made in the East Indies and before Gibraltar, that she sought to protract the treaty by artifice; and proposed so many vague exceptions, that almost every trace of the original draught was obliterated.¹

Negotiations for peace.

¹ Adolphus, vol. iii. p. 441.

CHAPTER XXV.

GEORGE III. (CONTINUED.)—1782.

Change in ministry through the death of lord Rockingham—Lord Shelburne's administration—Prorogation of parliament, and king's speech—Supplies—Anecdote respecting the regalia of the crown—Affairs of the war in America—Conduct of general Greene, and evacuation of Charleston—State of things in New York—Affair of captain Joshua Huddy—State of the war in the West Indies—Plan of our maritime warfare—Admiral Barrington's cruise—Brilliant affair of captain Jervis—Lord Howe's manœuvres—Dreadful losses sustained by admiral Graves's fleet—Loss of the Royal George—Siege and relief of Gibraltar—Prospect of a general pacification—Mr. Fitzherbert sent as minister plenipotentiary to Paris—Progress of negotiations—Attempts made by lord Shelburne to strengthen his cabinet—Hostilities commence between Pitt and Fox—Meeting of parliament in December—King's speech—Debates on the address, &c.—Parliament adjourns—Preliminary treaties—Affairs of Ireland—Embarrassed situation of the ministry—Commencement and conclusion of the coalition between Fox and lord North—Discussion of the preliminaries of peace in the house of lords—Defence of himself by lord Shelburne—Debates in the house of commons—Success of the coalition—Interregnum in the ministry—Addresses to the king for the appointment of a new administration—His majesty's embarrassment—Various attempts to form a cabinet—The coalition ministers forced on the king—Character of the coalition—Mr. Pitt's prudent and honorable conduct.

Death of
the marquis
of Rock-
ingham.

BEFORE any definitive measures of reconciliation and peace could be adopted, an event occurred which brought about another change in the British government: the marquis of Rockingham, who had been for some time in declining health, fell a victim, on the first of July, to a prevalent disorder, which acquired the name of influenza.

This liberal and patriotic nobleman's cabinet con-

tained within itself many jarring elements; for the dexterous and accomplished mind of lord Shelburne meditated supremacy; while the powerful genius of Fox, scarcely able to endure a rival, disdained to suffer a superior. All open indications of jealousy had hitherto been restrained by the dignified and conciliating character of the leader; but when his influence ceased, the centre of attraction vanished in the system, and a total dissolution followed. On the very day after his lordship's decease, the king, to whom the earl of Shelburne's political principles, and the numerical weakness of his party, were sufficiently agreeable, renewed the offer of placing him at the head of the cabinet: it was accepted, without any intimation being given to the principal members of the Rockingham party, who considered this conduct equivalent to a declaration of political hostility: accordingly a schism ensued among the whigs; Mr. Fox, lord John Cavendish, Mr. Burke, and many others left the administration; and the duke of Portland retired from his government in Ireland: when Fox was openly charged in parliament, on this account, with yielding to the feelings of disappointed ambition, he declared that his motive in resigning office was the appointment of lord Shelburne instead of the duke of Portland, whom the whigs considered as the natural successor of lord Rockingham. This acknowledgement brought on him a furious storm of invective, in which Mr. Pitt took the lead; who charged Fox with 'hazarding the honor of the government from personal motives, and the safety of the country from pique; with acting on the principle of men and not measures, while he had the phrase of 'measures and not men' perpetually on his lips; with endeavoring to embarrass the minister when he could not degrade him; and with abandoning the sincerity of his principles, rather than contract the bounds of his ambition; determining, when he could not rule the government with absolute sway, to stand forth in the character of its assailant.' Thus began the conflict between these two eminent men. The principal vacancies in administration were filled up as

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Lord Shelburne's administration.

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follows: lord Grantham and Mr. Thomas Townshend were appointed secretaries of state; colonel Barré was made paymaster of the forces in the room of Mr. Burke; sir George Younge succeeded Mr. Townshend as secretary at war; and the lord advocate of Scotland became treasurer of the navy: earl Temple went as lord-lieutenant to Ireland, with the honorable William Wyndham Grenville as his secretary: but the promotion which attracted most attention was that of Mr. William Pitt; who, at the early age of twenty-three, and without passing through any subordinate offices, was elevated to the post of chancellor of the exchequer, and leader in the house of commons; at a time, too, when the pecuniary concerns of the country were in a state of great embarrassment, owing to a long and expensive war, which still continued. A strong attachment had existed between lord Shelburne and the earl of Chatham; and though the character of his son differed in many important points from that of the present premier, yet Mr. Pitt enjoyed his confidence, and derived great advantage from his political experience.

In this era, however, of ministerial changes, the administration of lord Shelburne was not destined to form an exception. Few men had more qualifications for acquiring power than that nobleman; but no one failed more in retaining it. He was a very accomplished person; of great sagacity, promptitude, and force in debate; dignified and graceful in his exterior; able to draw resources from all the stores of literature; and more intimately acquainted with the policy of foreign courts than any statesman in Europe; yet a suspicion of insincerity attached itself to every step of his political progress: he was accused of such duplicity by his colleagues in office, that he had long been designated as a jesuit, and in the satires of the day obtained the political nickname of 'Malagrida.' He was particularly odious to Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke; the latter of whom, when he rose in the house to support his friend, who had been justifying the late resignations, declared, that 'if lord Shelburne was not

a Catiline or Borgia in morals, it must not be ascribed to any thing but his understanding.' The principal charge made against him by the public, at this crisis, turned on his known aversion to American independence: it was thence argued, that his proposals of peace were the effect of dissimulation; and the nation must depend on caprice or any other contingency for that benefit which its general voice now demanded.¹ His lordship's own defence of his appointment, in the house of lords, tended to corroborate this opinion: 'he had been charged,' he said, with 'inconsistency relative to the independence of America; but his opinion still was, as it always had been, that whenever the parliament of Great Britain acknowledged that point, the sun of England's glory was set for ever: ruin and independence were linked together—the ruin, not of England only, but of America also.' This language, though well calculated to obtain royal favor, excited no little astonishment in the colonies; for two months had scarcely elapsed, since sir Guy Carleton, who succeeded to sir Henry Clinton as chief in command, had been authorised to declare to congress 'that his majesty, desirous of removing all obstacles to peace, had commissioned Mr. Grenville to propose the independence of the united provinces in the first instance, instead of making it a condition of a general treaty:' this discordant language, therefore, was indignantly cited on the other side of the Atlantic, and echoed on this side, as a fresh instance of ministerial artifice and duplicity. When parliament was prorogued on the eleventh of July, the point in question

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¹ His sentiments at this time were plainly indicated to sir James Harris, and show that, like all his predecessors who entertained similar ones, he still leaned on that broken reed, the court of St. Petersburg. 'You have to act,' says he, in a despatch dated July 27, 'under an united ministry, which acts with the full confidence of the king. Our object is peace, if it can be had on reasonable terms; if not, to carry on the war with all the vigor possible; and in either peace or war to cultivate the empress's friendship, confidence, and esteem. She can make the peace, or turn the war; and in either case cannot fail to command the *hearts* of this country, which you know always govern it.' Again he observes, 'we are ready to make every sacrifice, provided she once agrees to *commit* herself. You must imagine, when I say this that we look for something more than *words* in our actual situation. We wish to avoid the *mediation*, because we have no confidence in the court of Vienna, and are ignorant of the private connexion which appears to have taken place between the Imperial courts.'

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was thus cautiously treated in the king's speech:— 'Nothing,' said his majesty, 'can be more repugnant to my feelings than the long continuance of so complicated a war; but, should the want of a corresponding disposition, on the part of the enemy, disappoint my hopes of terminating that calamity, I shall still rely on the spirit, affection, and unanimity of my parliament and people, to support the honor of my crown, and the interests of the nation. The most triumphant career of victory would not excite me to aim at more than reasonable terms of pacification; and I have the satisfaction to add, that I see no reason which should induce me to think of accepting less.' The supplies of this year were 100,000 seamen, with nearly the same number of land forces as were required in the preceding year. The loan was £13,510,000; the terms of which were near six per cent.: but stocks were so low as fifty-four. New taxes were laid on insurances, bills of exchange, inland and coasting navigation, brandy, beer, salt, and tobacco: but imposts, which pressed so heavily on the lower classes, produced, as might have been expected, considerable animadversion.

It must not be forgotten, that when his majesty went down to prorogue parliament, a curious instance occurred of that inconvenience which arises from a sudden alteration in the old arrangements of office. A necessity existed, on this occasion, for sending the crown and sceptre from the Tower to Westminster: but Mr. Burke's reform bill had suppressed the jewel office; its master had been superseded; and no new regulation adopted for the conveyance of the crown jewels on occasions of public ceremony. Application was made to the lord high steward and lord chamberlain; but they doubted their own authority to interfere: the next resource lay in the secretary of state, who gave an order to the keeper at the Tower for their transmission: but another difficulty then occurred; for, owing to the irregularity of the whole transaction, none of the royal carriages were in waiting: in this dilemma, the secretary was obliged to apply to Bow-

street; and a dozen constables from the office there were employed to convoy the regalia of England, in two hackney coaches, along the outskirts of London, to Westminster. Another colonel Blood might have rendered this day memorable in the annals of Great Britain.

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The blaze of war now languished, where it was first kindled, in the American colonies: the surrender of lord Cornwallis in reality terminated the martial contest. When the whole of South Carolina, except Charleston and its vicinity, had been abandoned by the British, general Greene directed his mind toward the future: he had been led to expect that the French fleet, with part of the land forces, would pass from the Chesapeake to Charleston, to co-operate with him in the recovery of the three most southern states: disappointed in that assistance, he was still bent on expelling his foes from North Carolina and Georgia, if not from their stronghold in Charleston; but though the spirit of enterprise was high in his army, few opportunities of exhibiting it occurred; while events of an alarming nature gave him occasion for exerting that sagacity and presence of mind which distinguished his character: it was discovered that a portion of his army had entered into correspondence with the British, for the purpose of delivering him into their power; but the ringleader being detected and shot, the chief conspirators deserted. While engaged in the duties of the field, the southern army had endured privations and hardships almost exceeding belief: it is said, on American authority, that a large part of it were at times almost as naked as they were born; and that the loins of the brave men who fought at Eutaw springs, were actually galled by the cartouch-boxes; while their shoulders were protected from rough accoutrements only by a piece of rug or a tuft of moss.² Left to repose, therefore, it is not surprising that they should brood over their sufferings, and expect some notice from the country which their valor had contributed to save: yet for a time they seemed to be

Progress
of the war
in America.

² Life of General Greene, in American National Gallery, p. 8.

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wholly forgotten by congress; and their murmurs began to be heard: symptoms of mutiny appeared in the Maryland line; but were preceded by a pathetic address to their general, in which they begged his attention to their thinned ranks, reduced from a brigade to about 200 men: but he had not the means to relieve them; and his mind was burdened with the most painful anxiety. 'His troops,' it is said, 'had received no pay for two years; they were nearly naked; often without meat and bread; while the sick and wounded were perishing for want of medicines and proper nourishment.'⁸ Discontent also existed among the officers of the legion, respecting the appointment of colonel Laurens to its command; and all tendered their resignation, complaining of partiality and injustice; but though the general accepted their commissions, he gave them such excellent advice, that they unanimously returned to their posts, resolving not to leave him in face of the enemy: in short, by his prudent and conciliatory conduct, he completely subdued the spirit of discord, and kept his whole army firm in its allegiance.

Charleston
evacuated
by the
British.

Except for the purpose of procuring provisions, the British troops undertook no new expedition: with their whole force they had been unable to keep possession of the country; and with diminished means it would have been folly to renew the strife: they therefore determined to evacuate Charleston; having agreed to leave it uninjured, on condition of their retreat being unmolested: accordingly, on the fourteenth of December, the American army entered the city as the British rear-guard departed from it; and the citizens, after having been for two years under the arbitrary restrictions of a hostile garrison, cut off from intercourse with their friends, and ignorant of their fate, now beheld them returning as liberators: solemn thanks, on this interesting occasion, were offered to God in the different places of public worship; and the whole city presented a scene of joy and festivity. Even after this period, the difficulty of supplying rations to the

⁸ Life of General Greene, in American National Gallery, p. 9.

army was so great, as to threaten serious consequences : but the general again removed the evil by becoming responsible, as an endorser of the contractors' bills : this transaction, however, is said to have been the cause of much subsequent embarrassment to himself and to his family after his decease.⁴

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At New York the American loyalists were filled with alarm and indignation at the tenth article of lord Cornwallis's capitulation ; but their fears were at length quieted by the judicious conduct of sir Henry Clinton, directing that in all cases the same attention should be paid to them as to the king's forces, without any distinction : yet, when the departure of the French fleet and the above-mentioned declaration had allayed their fears, an occurrence took place, which threatened to produce fresh contentions, and a mode of vengeful hostility more revolting than any that had yet been pursued. The Americans had always treated their own countrymen taken in arms against their cause with greater severity than other prisoners ; on which account, a board of associated loyalists had long been established at New York, invested with administrative authority, subject to the ratification of the commander in chief : they had a prison for captives brought in by their parties, and the power of exchange or release ; but with the express condition of not killing or maltreating their prisoners, under pretext of retaliation.

After the capitulation of lord Cornwallis, many loyalists urged sir Henry Clinton to threaten vengeance for injuries inflicted on those who had joined the royal standard ; but that prudent officer declined all such measures : while, however, he was engaged in

Affair of
captain
Huddy.

⁴ When peace was restored, and general Greene returned to his native state, he was received in every place through which he passed with admiration and enthusiasm : on his arrival at Princeton, where the congress was then sitting, that body resolved to present him with two pieces of ordnance, taken from the British army, 'as a public testimony of the wisdom, fortitude, and military skill which distinguished his command in the southern department.' They had previously voted him a British standard and a gold medal, for the battle of Eutaw. The state of Georgia presented him with a beautiful plantation, a few miles from Savannah ; and South Carolina conveyed to him a valuable estate : this latter he was obliged to part with, to free himself from the pecuniary obligations referred to in the text : to the former he removed, with his family, in the autumn of 1785 : but the next year saw the death of this second of the military commanders of America, in its war for independence. It was no slight honor to be second to Washington.

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negotiations for an exchange of prisoners, Joshua Huddy, a captain in the service of congress, was taken by a party of loyalists, and delivered over to captain Lippencott, one of their body, who, by order of the associated board, carried him into New Jersey, and there hung him on a tree; where a label affixed to his person denoted that this punishment was in retaliation for one White, a member of the association. Clinton, resenting this indignity offered to himself, and anticipating the unpleasant consequences likely to ensue, had arrested Lippencott, and ordered him to be tried for the offence; but he soon received a stern letter from Washington, requiring that the prisoner should be delivered to him, under threats of retaliation. The British commander expressed surprise and displeasure at this demand, as well as at the language in which it was conveyed; and as he had himself taken measures to appease justice, would not consent to adopt and extend a system of barbarity: Washington, however, was not deterred from seizing Messrs. Hatfield and Badgely as deserters, though protected by a flag of truce, announcing, at the same time, that he had selected a British officer, by lot, as an object of retaliation for Huddy, and that the time and place of his execution were fixed.

Sir Henry Clinton was relieved from the pain of farther negotiation on this distressing subject by his recall, which, after repeated solicitations, was at length granted: his successor was sir Guy Carleton, who accompanied the official intelligence of his arrival, on the seventh of May, with the pacific vote of the house of commons, and his own declaration to alleviate as much as possible the horrors of war; for which purpose he requested a passport for his aide-de-camp to communicate with congress. This reasonable request, however, was refused by Washington: who also limited the admission of flags of truce to a single spot; and his conduct was approved by congress; which body, as if apprehending a schism on the subject of peace, renewed its resolutions against a separate treaty with Great Britain. Sir Guy, however, labored to bring about a

cessation of hostilities, as well as an exchange of prisoners; and when he was enabled to state that negotiations for a general pacification had commenced with France, his applications began to meet with more regard. In the mean time, a distinct subject of painful negotiation urgently claimed his attention: the victim, on whom the lot had fallen to expiate the murder of Huddy, was an officer in the guards, a fine young man in his nineteenth year, the only son of sir Charles Asgill, a baronet of ancient family in Yorkshire; and to save him, entreaty and argument appeared equally unavailing: in this bitter extremity, maternal love overcame every obstacle; his distracted mother, by her pathetic appeals and indefatigable perseverance, prevailed on the queen of France to undertake her cause; and the entreaties of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette, backed by the earnest remonstrances of La Fayette, preserved captain Asgill from the ignominious fate of André. Washington, in obeying the order of congress to liberate his prisoner, declared, that in whatever light his agency might be viewed, he was never influenced by sanguinary motives; and that, in the present instance, he was happy in sparing the effusion of innocent blood.

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After Rodney's important victory, the war languished in the West Indies: the conquest however of the Bahama islands was effected by the Spanish governor of Cuba, without bloodshed; liberal terms being granted to the garrison, which consisted of invalids: some defenceless settlements also on Hudson's, Haye's, and Nelson's rivers were destroyed by a squadron under the celebrated la Perouse. To counterbalance these losses, the English captured some forts on the Mosquito shore from the Spaniards, and took Acra on the coast of Africa from the Dutch. The events which at this period took place in the East Indies have been already detailed; but the enemies of Great Britain still threatened, by a combination of naval forces in Europe, to reduce her maritime superiority. The armaments which France, Spain, and Holland had equipped for active service consisted of seventy ships

State of
the war in
the West
Indies.

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Gallant
conduct of
captain
Jervis.

of the line; but these formidable preparations were rendered ineffective by the vigilance and valor of our commanders.

As the force of Britain on her own coasts was very inferior to that of her enemies if united, the first object was to prevent their junction, and to weaken them by separate attacks; the second, to protect our numerous convoys, without leaving the country too much unguarded; and the third, to relieve the very important post of Gibraltar. Admiral Barrington, having sailed from Portsmouth with twelve ships of the line, to effect the first of these objects, met a French fleet of transports and merchantmen off Ushant, destined for the East Indies, under convoy of the *Protecteur* and *Pegase* of seventy-four guns, the *Actionnaire* of sixty-four, and a frigate: the British admiral commenced a chase; when the *Foudroyant*, captain Jervis, so far outstripped the rest during the night, that by daybreak he was out of sight of the fleet. Having come up with the *Pegase*, he commenced a fierce action, and after one hour secured her as a prize: both ships being fresh from harbor, and of equal force, the disparity of loss on each side was very remarkable; the French having eighty men killed, while no Englishman was slain, and only three or four wounded: the *Pegase*, reduced almost to a wreck, was placed in charge of captain Maitland of the *Queen*, while the *Foudroyant* proceeded in the chase.⁵ That

⁵ The *Foudroyant*, a French ship of eighty guns, was built on an admirable model, and was at this time considered the finest vessel in the British service. Like all the finest ships in that service she had been taken from the enemy, by the *Monmouth* of sixty-four, captain Gardiner; who fell gloriously in the well-contested action, February 28, 1758. The *Foudroyant*, however, did not strike her flag, until the *Swiftsure* came up and fired into her several broadsides. 'I have often wondered,' says captain Brenton, in his *Life of Lord St. Vincent*, 'at the dogged obstinacy of our navy and admiralty boards in the olden time, and never could comprehend why they should so pertinaciously adhere to their mode of ship-building, which experience should have taught them was so defective as to make us the laughing-stock of our enemies.' This excellent officer did not consider that during many successive administrations, the heads of those departments thought much more about political places, parliamentary contests, adulation of the higher powers, and other such matters, than the important duties attached to their office. Never perhaps was this scandalous neglect more prevalent than at the time of which we are now treating. No person endeavored to correct such abuses more than the gallant Jervis, when he rose to high official distinction; but it is only of late years that measures have been taken to remedy the evil.

officer, having taken 300 prisoners out of her, sent one of his lieutenants on board to guard the rest; when a French ship of war hove in sight, which turned out to be the *Actionnaire* armed *en flute*. A chase of fourteen hours brought him up with the enemy, who struck after the first broadside: the other pursuers also had the good fortune to capture twelve ships of the convoy, with stores, and about 1000 soldiers. After this successful cruise, the British squadron returned to port in consequence of very boisterous weather; and captain Jervis was invested with the order of the Bath, the precursor of more splendid rewards bestowed on him for services on a wider field. Admiral Kempenfeldt, with nine sail of the line, took the station which Barrington had quitted; while lord Howe, with a squadron of twelve sail, terrified the Dutch into a relinquishment of their designs on the Baltic trade of Great Britain.

In the mean time, de Guichen had formed a junction with the Spanish fleet at Cadiz; and the united armament, after having captured eighteen vessels of our outward-bound Quebec and Newfoundland fleets, now occupied the entrance of the channel: great apprehensions were entertained for the Jamaica fleet; but all the attempts of the enemy were baffled by the dexterity and skill of lord Howe with a very inferior force, without the necessity of an engagement: the combined squadrons neither intercepted our trade, nor effected a junction with the Dutch; and finding that no advantage could be derived from remaining in the channel, they retired from the British coasts.

But what the enemy was unable to effect in the destruction of our marine, the violence of the elements in part accomplished: one of the most terrible catastrophes that ever befell a fleet was incurred by that under admiral Graves, which sailed this summer, with the prizes taken by Rodney and Hood, to convoy the homeward-bound trade from the West Indies. All the trophies of those great men, except the *Ardent*, which put back to Port Royal, perished in the storm; two British line-of-battle ships foundered, with a great

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Loss of
the Royal
George.

number of merchantmen; and the number of lives lost exceeded 8000. The *Ville de Paris* was commanded by captain Wilkinson, a very experienced seaman, who had made twenty-four voyages to and from the West Indies, and had therefore been selected to lead the fleet through the gulf; but she was buried in the ocean with all on board, amounting to 800 souls: the crew of the *Ramilies*, consisting of more than 600, were saved from perishing with the ship, by the noble and intrepid conduct of admiral Graves. The horror of these calamities was aggravated by a melancholy accident at Portsmouth, which excited a deep concern throughout the nation: lord Howe, returning from his well-conducted cruise, anxiously urged the equipment of a squadron for the relief of Gibraltar; and the *Royal George*, of 100 guns, the finest ship in our navy, being destined for this service, was inclined on her side in order to undergo a slight process of careening, without the trouble or delay of going into dock: the vessel was at this time crowded with people from the shore, among whom were about 300 unfortunate women; and the crew itself amounted to 900: the carpenters had depressed the ship's side a little more than was intended; when, about ten o'clock in the morning of the twenty-ninth of August, as it was supposed, a sudden squall threw her on her beams end; and the gun ports being open, she filled instantly with water and went to the bottom. The brave admiral Kempenfeldt, writing in his cabin at the moment of the catastrophe, was thus suddenly buried in the ocean, with nearly 1000 sailors, women, and children: a victualler which lay near was swallowed in the vortex made by the submersion of this immense mass; and it was some time before any small craft could be employed to assist the few that survived so great a calamity. According to Mr. Barrow, in his '*Life of Earl Howe*,' very erroneous opinions were entertained of its cause: the members of the court-martial held on this occasion, he observes, were satisfied that it was not the heeling of the ship which occasioned her to sink; but that from the short time between the

alarm being given and the sinking of the vessel, they considered that some material part of her frame gave way, which could only be accounted for by the general state of decay in her timbers. Admiral Milbank deposed, that he saw her in dock at Plymouth, so bad, that to his recollection there was not a sound timber in her; the officers of the yard declaring, that they could scarcely find fastenings for the repairs which she underwent: sir John Jervis confirmed this statement of the admiral; and the general opinion was, that the whole side had given way bodily: it was also supposed that the navy board discountenanced all attempts to raise her, from a conviction of the state in which she would have made her appearance.

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In the mean time, the siege of Gibraltar, and the resolute defence made by its brave garrison, attracted the attention of all Europe: the duke de Crillon, the conqueror of Minorca, was appointed to conduct the operations by land; Don Juan de Moreno commanded the fleet; and it was resolved to employ the whole strength of the Spanish monarchy in seconding their efforts. From the failure of all plans hitherto attempted for the reduction of this rock, recourse was had to new projects, more especially to one formed by the chevalier d'Arçon, for the employment of floating batteries constructed so as to be impervious to shot, and indestructible by fire: with this view, their bottoms were made of massive timber, and their sides of wood and cork long soaked in water; with a thick layer of wet sand between them, and raw hides on the outside: to prevent the effect of red-hot balls, a number of pipes were laid to convey water through every part, and pumps were provided to keep these constantly supplied; the people on board being sheltered from the fall of shells by a cover of rope netting, in a slanting position, and overlaid with wet hides: ten of these floating castles, carrying from ten to twenty-eight guns each, and designed to lie moored within half gun-shot of the walls, were seconded by eighty barges full of troops, and mounted with cannon of the largest calibre; as well as by a multitude of

Siege and
relief of
Gibraltar.

CHAP. frigates, ships of various force, and some hundreds of
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General Elliott, the intrepid defender of this grand fortress, though aware that inventions of a peculiar nature were prepared against him, was ignorant of their mode of construction: yet he provided against every circumstance of danger that could be foreseen or imagined; and the confidence of his garrison rose in proportion to his vigilance and alacrity: the thirteenth of September was selected for the grand attack; when the newly invented machines, with all the known powers of engineering skill, were to be called into action. The combined fleets of France and Spain, amounting to forty-seven sail of the line, ten invincible battering ships carrying 212 guns, numerous frigates, xebèques, bomb-ketches, gun-boats, and other craft, were assembled in the bay of Gibraltar; while on the isthmus were erected stupendous works mounting 200 pieces of heavy ordnance, and protected by 40,000 troops; the numbers employed by land and sea against the rock being estimated at near 100,000 men: with such a force, it was intended to make one simultaneous attack on every part of its fortifications. In the mean time, the surrounding heights were crowded with people, as if all Spain was anxious to behold this magnificent spectacle; and when at length the signal was given, showers of shot and shells from the land batteries and ships of the besiegers, as well as from the various works of the fortress, exhibited an awful scene: four hundred pieces of heavy artillery were playing at the same moment on the garrison; and the fire was returned by incessant showers of red-hot balls and shells from the rock; so that the whole peninsula was involved in one terrific blaze: the floating batteries appeared at first to answer the expectation of their inventors; for the heaviest shells rebounded from their tops, while thirty-two pound shot made no visible impression on their hulls. For some hours the attack and defence were equally supported; and the battering ships seemed to defy the combined force of fire and

shot: in the evening, however, the effects of the red-hot balls became visible: at first there was only an appearance of smoke; but in the course of the night, two floating batteries burst into flames, and several others were visibly beginning to kindle; while the light of this conflagration enabled the garrison to direct their guns with unerring aim. Every effort of the besiegers was now directed to rescue and bring off their crews; but in this they were interrupted by captain Curtis, who, with twelve gun-boats, advanced and opened a raking fire on the whole line of batteries, so as to throw them into inextricable confusion: at four o'clock, six more floating batteries were enveloped in flames, and all hope of assisting their sailors was abandoned by the enemy: the break of day disclosed a dreadful spectacle; hundreds were seen in the midst of flames calling out for help; others were floating on pieces of timber, exposed to equal danger from the opposite element; while agonising cries and groans were heard on all sides: then it was that the generous humanity of the victors was found equal to their valor; and this was the more honorable, as the exertion of it subjected them to imminent peril: in his zealous endeavors to save the lives of his enemies, captain Curtis nearly lost his own; for while he lay alongside the burning vessels for this benevolent purpose, one of them blew up; and a heavy piece of timber falling into his pinnace, pierced through its bottom, after killing his coxswain and wounding several of his crew: by such noble exertions near 400 souls were saved from destruction; but the result was, that all the floating batteries were consumed; and the Spanish loss, exclusive of that sustained on the isthmus, was computed at 1500 men; while the garrison lost no more than three officers and thirteen privates killed; having five officers and sixty-three privates wounded.

In the mean time, lord Howe, with thirty-four sail of the line, arrived off Cape St. Vincent on the ninth of October; on the eleventh, he passed the straits, where the combined fleets, to the number of sixty-four sail, of which forty-two were of the line, had for some

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time been stationed to intercept him; but a violent hurricane drove them on the Barbary coast, and prevented the possibility of attack. Having thrown succors into the fortress, he set sail again for England; and when the enemy came up with him off Cape St. Vincent on the twentieth of October, he lay to in order to receive them; but, after exchanging a distant and ineffectual cannonade, he continued his voyage without farther molestation. Thus perished every hope of Spain to recover a barren rock, the value of which is above all price, and which still remains one of the brightest jewels that adorn the British crown. General Elliot, for his admirable defence, received the order of the Bath; and was raised to the peerage by the title of baron Heathfield, with a pension similar to that bestowed on Rodney.

Prospect
of general
pacifica-
tion.

This was the last action of importance in Europe during the war; and thus the military career of Great Britain, after repeated misfortunes, terminated with such splendor as to favor the prospect of a general pacification: the policy indeed of sheathing the sword was universally admitted; for each nation found, by a review of past events, that, although their losses were great, their gains weighed little in the opposite scale: England, in particular, had in this war increased her national debt by more than £130,000,000 sterling, and wasted the lives of at least 50,000 of her subjects; and, as if to increase her mortification, she afterwards discovered that she had been fighting for advantages very problematical, even if success had been attainable. The empress of Russia and the emperor of Germany still carried on the farce of mediation between the belligerent powers; but the disposition of Great Britain to recognise the independence of her colonies at length removed the grand obstacle that stood in the way of peace.

On the resignation of Mr. Fox and his friends, Mr. Grenville quitted Paris, and Mr. Fitzherbert was appointed by the new cabinet plenipotentiary on the part of Great Britain: the French ministers, however, continued for some time temporising and mysterious;

endeavoring by secret agency to excite the pride and resentment of the imperial court against this country, on account of the contempt previously shown for its mediation; but when their projects against our Indian possessions failed, and the empress of Russia, whose chief object of ambition lay apart from the scene of these quarrels, was conciliated, they began to conduct the negotiation with more sincerity; and, after the failure at Gibraltar, exerted themselves in persuading Spain to relinquish all hope of obtaining that fortress by treaty: as yet, however, a cautious secrecy on the subject was observed: the first authentic notice of it was in a letter from the secretary of state to the lord mayor; and to prevent any injurious speculations in the funds, it was merely declared that the negotiation promised a decisive conclusion, either for peace or war; on which account parliament would be prorogued from the twenty-sixth of November to the fifth of December.

Even at this period, says Mr. Adolphus,⁶ ministers could not form a determinate opinion on the final events: the treaty with France was most advanced; but that crafty power held the ultimate decision in her own hands: if really disposed to make peace, she could influence Spain and Holland; if otherwise, she could throw on them the blame of continuing hostilities: Mr. Fitzherbert, however, succeeded, by his ability and judgment, in obtaining from the American commissioners the signature of provisional articles. This great stroke of policy would naturally incline France to relinquish a contest, in which success became more uncertain, while the expenses were enormous.

Lord Shelburne had weathered the storm through the last session of parliament; but in England no minister can long stand against public opinion. After a consultation with his colleagues, and a fair calculation of the assistance he might expect, it was thought advisable to procure some additional support in the house of commons: Mr. Pitt, on this occasion, ex-

* From correspondence and private information, vol. iii. p. 461.

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hibited an instance of manly sincerity, by giving his decided negative to any union with lord North: he declared that he could not, from a sense of duty, enter into any political connexion with a statesman whose administration had brought so much disgrace and calamity on his country, and whose principles he had so repeatedly condemned: this determination arose from no personal dislike to lord North; but from a conviction that a change of that system, which had been so long pursued, was necessary to rescue the kingdom from its dangers.

Hostilities
commence
between
Pitt and
Fox.

It was then determined to apply to Mr. Fox, against whom the same objections did not lie: Mr. Pitt, accordingly, waited on him by appointment; and the interview was marked by a few strong traits of character in the personages concerned. Fox asked, at once, whether it was proposed, in the present negotiation, that lord Shelburne should remain premier; to which Pitt immediately answered in the affirmative: Fox then warmly asserted that he never would belong to any administration, of which the earl of Shelburne was the head; and Pitt, with equal promptitude, replied, 'that all farther discussion would be useless; for he did not come to betray lord Shelburne.' This, according to Mr. Pitt's biographer, was the last time these illustrious men were in the same private room together:⁷ they had now drawn the sword, and neither of them sheathed it while both survived.

Meeting of
parliament.

When parliament met on the fifth of December, his majesty, in a long speech, declared that provisional articles had been adjusted with the American states, whose independence, with a reluctance which nothing but the wishes of his people could subdue, he had engaged to acknowledge in the definitive treaty. Among other topics, he alluded to the valiant exertions of the army and navy, the economical reforms which would be necessary, and the attention required by the concerns of Ireland and India. No direct opposition was made to the address; but Mr. Fox was inclined to recognise the independence of America at once, and

⁷ Tomline's Life of Pitt, vol. i. p. 89.

to reserve it as one of the conditions of peace: lord Shelburne, he said, had fully, though reluctantly, agreed to this principle; but afterwards swerving from it had occasioned a division in the cabinet. Lord North dissented from Fox's opinion on this point; did he think the country so reduced as to be obliged to accept such terms of peace as its enemies might wish to impose on it. Mr. Burke detected in his speech a dangerous mode of delusion, unmeaning professions, and an undeserved self-commendation; he was ready to join in thanking his majesty for including provisional articles of pacification. In the other house there was no division; but lord Stormont vehemently opposed the irrevocable concession of independence to American commissioners acting under the control of France. Lord Shelburne denied the necessity of such control, as well as any unqualified and unconditional offer of independence: if France did not consent to put an end to the contest, that independence would not be recognised. This explanation occasioned many severe remarks in the lower house, when the address was reported: duplicity, hypocrisy, and discordancy of opinion were freely imputed to ministers; but no division took place till the 18th of December, when Fox moved for copies of such parts of the provisional treaty as concerned the recognition of American independence, assigning as his motive the diversity of language used by ministers. Mr. Thomas Pitt moved for the order of the day, being supported by lord North; and the immense majority by which this motion was carried, showed the weakness of the other party in opposition.⁸ On the twenty-third of December, parliament adjourned during the Christmas recess; during which interval, Preliminary treaties were executed by France and America. Intelligence of these proceedings was conveyed by a French vessel from Cadiz, with a letter from the marquis de Lafayette; and soon afterwards sir Guy Carleton officially announced the total cessation of hostilities. Proclamation to that effect

* 219 against 46.

was made in the American army on the 19th of April; exactly eight years from the day on which the first blood in this memorable contest was shed at Lexington. The British troops, at New York, evacuated that city on the 25th day of November following; when it was delivered into the charge of governor Clinton, in the presence of WASHINGTON its deliverer.

The American colonies, by their treaty with Great Britain, secured independence in its full extent, with advantageous boundaries, comprehending the countries on both sides of the Ohio, and on the east of the Mississippi: they received the liberty also of fishing on the banks of Newfoundland; and the navigation of the Mississippi, from its source to the ocean, was rendered free to both parties. By our treaty with France, the right of fishing on the coast of Newfoundland was ceded to that nation, from Cape St. John on the east, round the north of the island, to Cape Bay on the west:⁹ the French were also put into possession of the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, Tobago and St. Lucie. In Africa, the river Senegal, with its forts and dependencies, was ceded, and the island of Goree restored: in the East Indies, England gave up all her conquests, and allowed France her accustomed commerce, whether by a company or by individuals: the articles also relative to the port of Dunkirk, established at the peace of Utrecht, were now abrogated. France, on her part, restored to Great Britain the islands of Grenada and the Grenadines, St. Vincent, Dominica, St. Christopher's, Nevis, and Montserrat: in Africa, she also ceded the possession of fort James and the river Gambia. In her treaty with Spain, Great Britain

⁹ On this point the following observations were communicated to the author by Dr. Valpy of Reading:—'The English, however, retained possession of the valuable salmon fishery on this coast: yet in the year 1788 our minister, by a strange dereliction of national rights and interests, gave it up exclusively to the French, who destroyed all the British settlements on that part of the island. The merchants of Bristol, Dartmouth, and Jersey, deputed alderman Noble of Bristol to wait on Mr. Nepean, secretary to the treasury, who coldly replied, that we only gave up about £5000 per annum; for which it was not worth while to quarrel with France, who made a point of acquiring this exclusive possession. To this Mr. Noble rejoined, that he would willingly give £1000 a-year for *any one* of the numerous salmon brooks which run into St. George's bay: but the deputation was scornfully dismissed. Many families, and my own among the number, sustained a very severe loss on this occasion, without ever receiving any compensation.'

gave up the island of Minorca, and East Florida; but regained Providence and the Bahama islands: his catholic majesty also retained West Florida, but guaranteed to English subjects the right of cutting logwood in the bay of Honduras. Holland also agreed to a cessation of hostilities; but the terms of pacification were not arranged.

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Thus the light of peace again illuminated the western hemisphere; and, as an elegant writer has observed, 'an independent empire arose, boundless in extent, and removed from the reach of the arms—secure at least from the invasions, of Europe; beginning its career with such advantages as our communities in the old world never possessed; beginning almost from the point at which they have but arrived in the progress of nearly 2000 years. It is even possible (he goes on to say) that what England once was, may have to be traced out hereafter, by the philosophers of distant ages, from the language, customs, manners, and political feelings of men inhabiting the banks of the Mississippi; or enjoying the benefits of society amid what may be now a wilderness, inaccessible to the footsteps of every human being.'¹⁰

It is painful to reflect that men, who had so nobly won their own independence, should have proceeded instantly to form a constitution which sanctioned the establishment of *domestic slavery* under its most abominable aspect; which enacted the punishment of *death* in its most degrading form to any citizen who should assist a wretched slave to escape from his horrid doom; and which denied even to men of color most of those privileges for which they themselves had fought. For the introduction into their constitution of that democratic spirit which never varies in character, brutalizing society, grasping at the possessions of others, and violating all public faith, some allowance may be made on account of indignation and resentment at the wrongs which they had suffered from the monarchical principle, strongly developed in our own sovereign, and abetted by the national selfishness and ignorance

¹⁰ See professor Smyth's Lectures, vol. ii. p. 350.

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then prevailing. It would have been happy for them, and for the world at large, had they inclined more to the wise and passionless sentiments of Washington in the constitution of a federal government—but still more so, if the inclinations of a considerable party in the American army toward Washington himself could have been carried out consistently with honor. At the close of the present war, this party, suffering grievously under the unjust conduct of their embryo republic, and foreseeing the evils about to be perpetuated by its establishment, actually solicited their successful commander to assume the sovereign authority; and if necessary, even the regal title. Washington, however, who always considered himself a citizen more than a soldier, and who had solemnly promised to resign his military commission into the hands of those who had entrusted it to his honorable keeping, never wavered for an instant; but returned an indignant reply to the communication made to him on this subject, and a stern rebuke to its authors; declaring that ‘no occurrence in the war had given him more painful sensations.’¹¹ At the same time he exerted himself strenuously, and not ineffectually, in procuring from congress a redress of grievances; and then turned his thoughts to the prevention of many evils anticipated by him in that form of government which he knew would be established;¹² and which he was unwilling to reject. Unhappily for America herself, those evils, and many others of a deeper dye, have gone on increasing and developing themselves to the whole world; while the really free constitution of Great Britain has enabled this country so to reform her political institutions, so to advance the intellectual, moral, and religious character of all classes within her pale, that the monarchical principle of her government is no longer available for evil, though effectual for great practicable good; and as long as she thus recommends herself to the favor of Divine Providence, there is no reason to fear for that national catastrophe, which

¹¹ See Jared Sparks's *Life of Washington*, vol. i. p. 382.

¹² *Ibid.* p. 394.

the writer above quoted has allowed to pass through his imagination: neither let any republic in the new world, however distant from the old, or however gigantic in extent it be, suppose that it may injure and insult the nations of another hemisphere with impunity, in this age of inventions, so pregnant with destructive powers, so capable of abridging time and space.

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Although the public mind was wholly occupied with the preliminaries of peace, another object claimed attention from our legislature. The declaratory act of George I., regarding the legislative superiority of the British parliament, had been repealed agreeably to Mr. Grattan's requisition; but the Irish were instigated to demand farther concessions: Mr. Flood, a contemporary orator of great ability, contended that a simple repeal merely withdrew an offensive declaration, without renouncing the principle; and that it was necessary, for the security of Irish rights, that Great Britain should formally renounce her claim asserted by that act. As Grattan resisted this proposal, because it was not only unnecessary, but offensive to Great Britain, a long and bitter altercation ensued between these distinguished men; but Flood was supported by the test of popularity, while a torrent of public odium fell on the man who had been lately denominated the savior of his country. Lord Temple, the new viceroy of Ireland, thinking it right that this question should be decided, rather than left to agitate the national mind, recommended to ministers a bill of renunciation: accordingly, on the twenty-second of January, the first day of transacting business after the recess, Mr. Townshend moved for leave to bring in a bill for removing all doubts concerning the legislative rights of the parliament and courts of Ireland, and preventing the adjudication of any writ of error or appeal from that kingdom in the courts of Great Britain. The debates in its different stages were animated, and involved a discussion whether treason committed in Ireland could be tried in Great Britain, under the statute of Henry VIII.: the prevailing opinion was in

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favor of the affirmative; that law having been confirmed by an Irish statute: the bill at length passed both houses without a division; and before its arrival in the upper house, Mr. Townshend had acquired a right of supporting it there under the title of lord Sydney. No position could be more fraught with difficulties, than was that of ministers at this time in parliament: arrayed against them was the party of lord North, experienced in public business, powerful by its long possession of place, and extending its influence in various ramifications throughout every department; while the failure of the negotiation with Fox had created a still more serious obstacle to their plans; for it fixed, as their adversary, the most powerful debater in the British senate. An acute reasoner without the formality of argument, a subtle sophist under a disguise of the most simple candor, throwing all his feelings into his speech, and seizing on the popular sympathies by appeals of the most natural sensibility, Fox possessed every quality calculated to make an impression on a mixed multitude; and in the house of commons he was at this time irresistible.

Coalition
between
Fox and
lord North.

Against so mighty an antagonist, armed with specious topics, and supported in the house by the personal resentments of its most influential members, Pitt had to fight the battles of a cabinet, which, as soon as it took office, became loaded with unpopularity: his cause appeared almost hopeless; when one of those singular and instructive events occurred, which was to change the whole aspect of political affairs; and, by casting an indelible stain on the character of his rival, to raise that of the youthful minister still higher in the scale of honor: this was the celebrated coalition between Fox and lord North. The determined resolution shown by the cabinet against these two statesmen, excited on their part a determination to take it by storm, and by any means in their power; so it was proposed that the two parties should coalesce: a negotiation therefore was set on foot, at the instigation of Mr. Eden,¹³ the honorable Mr. North conducting it

¹³ Afterwards lord Auckland.

for his father, and colonel Fitzpatrick for Fox : the business was hastily despatched, for affairs were pressing; the debate on the peace being fixed for the seventeenth: it was not till near four in the morning of the sixteenth, that, after numerous messages, an alliance was concluded, which was destined first to overthrow its opponents, and afterwards to ruin those by whom it was cemented. Happy would it have been, more especially for Mr. Fox, had his education and mode of life permitted him to despise the sweets of office, and to occupy that dignified position so frequently held by our leaders of opposition; which enables them to exercise an indirect power, most beneficial to the country, and is sure to bring them into place at the first proper opportunity.

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On the day appointed for discussing the provisional treaty, lord Pembroke in the house of lords moved an address of approbation, and was seconded by the marquis of Carmarthen: an amendment was proposed by lord Carlisle; who, as well as lords Walsingham, Sackville, Stormont, and Loughborough, reprobated in eloquent speeches the preliminaries of peace, which they considered highly injurious to the interests of the nation. The dereliction of the American loyalists, and of our allies among the Indians, was declared to be a baseness unexampled in history: no degree of distress should have induced us to subscribe to terms so disgraceful, or to yield up so many important possessions in all quarters of the world, restore so many inlets to the commerce of our enemies, and cede such large privileges in our fisheries: the permission given to France to fortify Dunkirk, became an object of peculiar animadversion, as likely to be most injurious to our trade in the event of another war: and all these sacrifices, it was said, were made on the score of reciprocal advantages.

Discussions
on the
peace.

The minister ably defended himself against these attacks; declaring that peace was an object for which the nation at large had manifested the most unequivocal desire: the great end he had in view was the benefit of his country; and this he was certain he had

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secured. The vast uncultivated tract of land south of the lakes was of infinite consequence to America, and of none to England: the retention of it, or even of the forts which commanded it, would only have laid the foundation of future hostility. If our liberality to Ireland was the subject of just applause, why act on principles of illiberality towards America? The refusal of the Newfoundland fishery would have been a direct manifestation of hostile intentions; and as it lay on their coasts, it was in reality impossible to exclude them from it by any restrictions: it is an advantage which nature has granted to them; and the attempt to wrest it from their hands would not only be unjust, but impracticable. Of one objection his lordship acknowledged that he deeply felt the force: his regret and compassion for the situation of the unhappy loyalists were as pungent as those of their warmest advocates. This objection admitted but of one answer, which he had given to his own bleeding heart,—‘It is better that a part should suffer than that the whole empire perish.’ He would have dashed from him the bitter cup which the adversities of his country held out to him, if peace had not been absolutely necessary; if it had not been called for with an unanimity and vigor that could not be resisted: no arts of address or negotiation had been neglected; but the American commissioners had no power to concede more: congress itself had not the power; for by the constitution of America each state of the union was supreme, including in itself the legislative and judicial powers: its jurisdiction, therefore, was not liable to control. In one mode of interposition alone, which was recommendation, could congress act. If, after all, the loyalists should not be received into the bosom of their native country, Great Britain, penetrated with gratitude for their services, and warm with feelings of humanity, would afford them an asylum; and it would doubtless be wiser to indemnify them for their losses, than to ruin the nation by renewing or prolonging the calamities of war. The cession of East Florida, said his lordship, was rendered unavoidable by the mistaken

and ruinous policy of ministers, who had brought the nation to the necessity of treating with its enemies on terms very different from those which it could formerly have commanded : this province, however, detached from West Florida, already conquered by the arms of Spain, was of little value; and the amount of its imports and exports bore no proportion to the expense of its civil establishment : we had, nevertheless, obtained a compensation for it in the restitution of the Bahamas. Although the bounds of the French fishery were somewhat enlarged, the most eligible parts of the Newfoundland coast were still left in possession of the English; and a source of future contention was removed by an exact delineation of boundaries. In exchange for St. Lucie, France had restored six of the seven islands she had taken; and had only retained Tobago. Senegal and Goree had been originally French settlements, but their commerce was inconsiderable; and the whole African trade was open to the English, through our settlements on the Gambia, which were guaranteed to us by this treaty. The restoration of Pondicherry, and our other conquests in the east, must be acknowledged not a measure of expediency, so much as of absolute necessity, if the state of the East India company were adverted to: such had been the formidable confederacy with which they were compelled to contend; such the wretched derangement of their finances; and so exposed to hazard were their vast and precarious possessions; that nothing but peace could recover to them their ascendancy in Asia: under such circumstances, it was impossible to procure terms of accommodation more honorable. The removal of the restraints relative to the harbor of Dunkirk,—restraints disgraceful to France, and of trifling advantage to England, was inveighed against without candor or reason: Dunkirk, as a port, was far from possessing the consequence ascribed to it; lying near a shoaly part of the channel, it cannot receive ships of a large size, and can never become a rendezvous for squadrons; it may indeed be a resort for privateers, but these we know

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by experience could easily issue from other ports. In fine, the confederacy formed against us was decidedly superior to our utmost exertions: our taxes were exorbitant; our debts, funded and unfunded, amounted to £247,000,000 sterling; our commerce was rapidly declining; our navy was overbalanced by fleets of the combined powers, in the alarming superiority of more than fifty ships of the line. Peace then was necessary to our existence as a nation: the best terms of accommodation which our situation would admit, had been procured; and his lordship ventured to affirm, that they could be decried or opposed only by ignorance, prejudice, or faction. On a division, the address was carried by a majority of seventy-two to fifty-nine.

In the house of commons, ministers were less successful. To the address, moved by Mr. Thomas Pitt, and seconded by Mr. Wilberforce, an amendment was proposed by lord John Cavendish, and seconded by Mr. St. John. A rumor of the coalition had gained ground during the day, and the house was unusually crowded; several members spoke in favor of the address; among whom Mr. Powys and Mr. Dundas both defended the treaties, and contended that ministers had done all in their power for the American loyalists: both also adverted to the coalition; the former gentleman declaring 'that the present era was remarkable for strange confederacies: great and arbitrary despots stood forth as protectors of an infant republic; and in that house, lofty and strenuous assertors of high prerogative had combined with humble worshippers of the majesty of the people: the most determined advocate of crown influence was seen hand in hand with the great purifier of our constitution.' Mr. Sheridan adverted to these reflections in a speech replete with sarcasm; and pointed out quite as extraordinary a coalition as that of lord North and Mr. Fox;—between the lord advocate, that zealous supporter of regal prerogative, and Mr. William Pitt, the most popular leader in the cause of parliamentary reform.

Mr. Fox, when he rose to explain his conduct, strongly attracted the attention of the house: he spoke with his accustomed energy, and with more than his usual daring; boldly avowing the coalition, and deriding the idea of eternal enmity in politics: the American war had been the sole cause of his disagreement with the noble lord; which cause being now removed, it was surely wise to terminate the ill-will which it had occasioned. 'When I was the friend of lord North,' he continued, 'I found him open and sincere; when the enemy, honorable and manly: he never practised those paltry subterfuges, stratagems, and manœuvres, which destroy confidence, while they degrade the statesman and the man: it is not in my nature to bear malice, or live in ill-will: my friendships are perpetual, my enmities are not so: *amicitiæ sempiternæ, inimiciæ placabiles*.'

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Lord North had come down to the house late in the evening; and being oppressed with age, heaviness of frame, and the fatigues of the preceding night, he retired into the members' gallery, and gave way to slumber; desiring some of his friends to rouse him if any thing of importance should occur: when he awoke, he obtained from those around him a sketch of the speeches that had been made; and then proceeding into the body of the house, he seated himself beside Mr. Fox. While all were gazing on this unusual position, he arose; and to the astonishment of those who had seen him sleeping through the debate, he reviewed the whole with incomparable skill; kept the house in perpetual laughter by his wit; and, after a most dexterous and animated speech, carried his amendment by a majority of sixteen in a house of 432 members.

This defeat of the ministry was considered as a prelude to its dissolution; for it was evident that the opposition would follow up their triumph: the subject was accordingly brought before the house again on the twenty-first of February, by lord John Cavendish, who expressed his concern that the majority for the amendment had been represented as voting against the peace: he was therefore desirous of convincing the

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nation, and the powers with whom we were treating, that our resolution was fixed against a renewal of the war: nevertheless, he highly reprobated the terms on which peace had been obtained, and read the following motions:—1. ‘That in consideration of public faith, which ought to be preserved inviolable, his faithful commons will support his majesty in rendering firm and permanent the peace to be concluded definitively, in consequence of the provisional treaty and the preliminary articles. 2. That in concurrence with his majesty’s paternal regard for his people, they will employ their best endeavors to improve the blessings of peace. 3. That his majesty, in acknowledging the independence of the United States of America, has acted as the circumstances of affairs indisputably required, and in conformity with the sense of parliament. 4. That the concessions made to the adversaries of Great Britain are greater than they were intitled to, either from the actual situation of their respective possessions, or from their comparative strength: and, 5. That the house will take the case of the loyalists into consideration, and administer such relief as their conduct and necessity may be found to merit. The first two of these resolutions were agreed to without opposition: on the third, a short debate took place, occasioned by doubts arising in the minds of several members, respecting the power vested in the king to acknowledge the independence of the United States; which, it was unanimously declared by the gentlemen of the long robe, his majesty had full authority to do, in consequence of the statute passed last year, enabling him to make peace with America: the last resolution lord John Cavendish consented to waive; but on the fourth, which conveyed so pointed a censure against the administration, a very animated debate took place, in which Mr. Pitt distinguished himself. He examined at great length the grounds of the treaty, and defended the policy of ministers with admirable perspicuity and force of argument, attributing all that was perplexing in negotiations to the errors of lord North. With respect to the preliminaries, he observed; ‘these are

the conditions to which this country, engaged with four powerful states, has thought fit to subscribe for the dissolution of that confederacy, and the immediate enjoyment of peace. Let us look to what is left with a manly courage: let us strengthen ourselves against inveterate enemies, and reconcile ancient friends: the misfortunes of kingdoms, as well as of individuals, when laid open and examined with true wisdom, are more than half redressed; and to this great object should be directed all the virtue and abilities of this house.' He then directed some severe sarcasms at Fox:—'The honorable gentleman,' said he, 'has virtually declared, that because he was prevented from prosecuting the noble lord to the satisfaction of public justice, he will heartily embrace him as his friend; so readily does he reconcile extremes, and love the man whom he was ready to impeach: in the same spirit, I suppose, he will cherish the peace because he abhors it.'

With regard to his own share in the censures pointed against ministers by the present motion, he observed,—'I shall bear it with fortitude, because my heart tells me I have not acted wrong: to this monitor, which never did, and, I trust, never will deceive me, I shall confidently repair, as to an adequate asylum from all the clamors of interested faction.' He proceeded in a strain of eloquence scarcely to be surpassed in ancient or modern times: the house was wrapped in one feeling of admiration; but the coalition prevailed, and this night decided the fate of lord Shelburne, who was left with a minority of seventeen in a house of 397: he had to contend not only with his regular parliamentary opponents, but with that detached corps, called 'the king's friends,' who took all opportunities of decrying the peace: for though the recognition of American independence had been sanctioned by his majesty, he could not forgive the minister who had advised and concluded the treaty.¹⁴

¹⁴ In the correspondence from which large extracts have already been made, it appears, from the king's language after the peace, that his feelings towards America were not altered; though circumstances constrained him to change his conduct.

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Interreg-
num of the
ministry.

The success of opposition rendering a change certain, the house of commons adjourned from time to time, with the view of forwarding a new arrangement: by these ineffectual endeavors to accommodate party views, the business of the nation was suspended; and more than a month passed in a kind of ministerial interregnum, though at no time was an able administration more necessary.

The disembodiment of the militia, and the discharge of seamen and soldiers without pay, spread tumult throughout the kingdom; the treaty with France and Spain was not concluded; no commercial alliance was adjusted with America; and the affairs of the India company demanded immediate attention.

Such was the state of public matters, when Mr. Coke, one of the members for Norfolk, moved, on the twenty-fourth of March, an address to the king; 'that he would be graciously pleased to take into consideration the unsettled state of the empire, and condescend to comply with the wishes of his commons, in forming an administration intitled to the confidence of his people:' this address was unanimously carried, and presented by such members as had the rank of privy counsellors. His majesty's reply stated, 'that his earnest desire was to do all in his power to comply with the wishes of his faithful commons.' Such an answer, however, not being deemed sufficiently explicit, lord Surrey moved another address, in strong and pointed terms, 'assuring his majesty that delay in a matter of such moment, inevitably tends to weaken the authority of government; and most humbly entreating his majesty, to take such measures for this object, as may quiet the apprehensions of his faithful subjects.' An acrimonious debate ensued, in which Mr. Dundas intimated, that as the chancellor of the exchequer had on that day resigned office, no farther difficulties would arise. Mr. Pitt had always declared that he only retained his situation till a successor could be nominated; and his permanent retention of it would not have been repugnant to the wishes of any party, if other consistent appointments could have been

arranged: after this explanation lord Surrey withdrew his motion, and ministers gave way to their victorious antagonists.

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The delay which had been so much complained of arose from the king's great embarrassment. Indignant at the name of Fox, who had loaded him with insults, and annoyed by lord North's desertion in the hour of danger, he offered the government to lord Gower; but that nobleman confessed he had no means of diminishing the hostile majority: the duke of Portland and lord North were then sent for; but a proposal that lord Thurlow should keep the great seal broke off this negotiation; as he was considered not only intractable in the cabinet, but a spy of the palace. His majesty then applied to Mr. Pitt to relieve him from his anxiety, offering him full powers to nominate his colleagues: Pitt's friends advised compliance with the royal wish; and for twenty-four hours, during which Dundas had procured an adjournment of the house, he paused: but the formidable majority was still before him; his sagacity foresaw, that if his opponents accepted office, they would soon split into divisions; while the gauntlet thrown down to them when flushed with victory would tend only to cement their union: he therefore declined the honors so graciously offered. The king, still averse to Fox, then sent for lord North; but he was bound not to stir without his brother coalitionist: Fox therefore was reluctantly admitted into the negotiation, and the duke of Portland proposed for the treasury; but this arrangement was broken off by a demand of the junto to have the appointment of the whole household: his majesty again had recourse to Mr. Pitt for assistance, and wrote in the most pressing terms to urge his compliance; but in vain; his maturer judgment still forbade acceptance of the honors thrust upon him; and in a firm but dutiful manner he declined them, however flattering to his young ambition. The king's situation now became almost intolerable; and it is said, that in despair he meditated a retreat to Hanover; but from that

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hazardous experiment he was deterred by the advice of lord Thurlow. 'Your majesty,' said he, roughly, but honestly, 'may go to your electoral dominions; nothing is more easy: but you may not find it so easy to return, when your majesty becomes tired of staying there: James II. did the same; but you must not follow his example.' The chancellor made this advice palatable, by assuring the king that he would not be long troubled with the coalition; for they could not come into power without soon committing some act which would expose them to crimination; and a short period only was necessary to show the justness of this observation.

His majesty accordingly yielded to the force of circumstances, and in the beginning of April a new administration was announced. In its arrangement the duke of Portland was first lord of the treasury; lord North and Mr. Fox secretaries of state; the former for the home, the latter for the foreign department: lord John Cavendish was re-appointed chancellor of the exchequer, and lord Keppel replaced lord Howe at the head of the admiralty:¹⁵ lord Stormont was created president of the council, and the earl of Carlisle privy seal: the great seal was put into commission; lord chief justice Loughborough, so distinguished for his political versatility, being declared first commissioner, and lord Mansfield appointed speaker of the house of lords: the government of Ireland was given to lord Northington; Mr. Burke being reinstated as paymaster of the forces. Of the seven cabinet ministers, the majority, who also occupied the most important posts, were of the old whig or Rockingham party; lord Stormont, lord North, and lord Carlisle contenting themselves rather with a participation of

¹⁵ Lord Howe had been appointed to this high office, soon after his return to England, on the 28th of January; when he rendered an important service to his country by personally appeasing a mutinous spirit in its navy, occasioned by strong suspicions entertained by the sailors, that the ships, just returned from foreign service, would not be paid off, but refitted and sent again to sea: this too he effected in such a manner as to intitle himself to the honorable name by which he was distinguished, the 'sailor's friend.' In debate on the preliminaries of peace he gave a very unsatisfactory account of the condition of our ships.

honors and emoluments, than of power: notwithstanding, therefore, the admission of these tory lords into the ministry, it was still acknowledged, as to all great purposes of government, a whig administration; more especially when the ability, vigor, and decision of its efficient leader were fairly estimated: but unfortunately a junction of persons, whose principles were radically hostile, operated to diminish public confidence in their measures, and to unsettle all calculations with respect to their future movements: while therefore it obtained for them a victory, it deprived them of the more solid advantages of conquest. It might, indeed, shelter lord North from all future examination of his conduct in the American war; and serve the ambition of Mr. Fox, for a time, by giving him the immediate support of that nobleman's adherents: but it was an unnatural and dishonorable union; very different from that in 1757, by which the interests of the king and people were reconciled, and the good genius of Great Britain enabled to triumph at home and abroad: this was in fact a mere barter of opinions and interests between partisans of the people and supporters of prerogative; and by confounding those badges of opinion on which the eyes of followers are fixed, and by which their confidence is kept alive, it disgusted honorable men, and long shed a noxious influence over the political atmosphere.

Mr. Pitt's conduct in these trying circumstances was no less prudent and dignified, than it had been during the parliamentary conflict which subverted lord North's cabinet: even then he wasted none of his transcendent powers in rash and violent accusations, like Fox; nor did he indulge in excursions through the regions of imagination, like Burke: but he directed his attacks against the administration with a steady daring, and consummate skill, nor did he fail to draw with great nicety a line between the sovereign and his responsible ministers: for nearly six weeks after the retreat of lord Shelburne, the whole business of government had devolved on his shoulders; and he

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transacted it in such a manner as constantly to increase the public admiration; so that it was said, 'while Pitt is in the house there is no want of a ministry.' He now thought, that to preserve his independence, and keep himself free from the shackles of ambitious and intriguing statesmen, was the wisest course; and the respect of the king and people, which accompanied his retirement from office, ratified his judgment.

CHAPTER XXVI.

GEORGE III. (CONTINUED.)—1783.

Re-establishment of commercial intercourse, &c. with America—
Provision made for the American loyalists—Loan of £12,000,000
—Outcry against it—Mr. Pitt's motion for reforming the treasury
—Indian affairs brought before the house, and relief bill passed
—Mr. Pitt's bill for a reform of parliament—Rejected—Other
popular measures of Mr. Pitt—Petition of the quakers against
the slave trade—Settlement on the prince of Wales—Prorogation
of parliament—Execution of treaties, &c.—Effects of American
war—State of foreign nations—Mr. Adams arrives as envoy from
the United States—His interview with the king—Affairs of
America—Evils consequent on the reduction of the army—
Services of Washington—He bids adieu to his officers—Resigns
his command to congress—His subsequent good offices—Chosen
president of the United States—Re-elected to that station—His
final retreat from public affairs—English affairs—The king's
disgust at the coalition ministry—Fox gives notice of his cele-
brated India bill—Meeting of parliament—King's speech—In-
troduction of Mr. Fox's bill—Debates on it—Rejected—Pro-
ceedings of parliament in consequence—Ministry dissolved by
the king—Commencement of Mr. Pitt's administration.

ONE of the most important objects, the decision of which appeared to be suspended by the late ministerial interregnum, was the re-establishment of commercial dealings with America: bills were accordingly introduced for repealing the restraining act, and establishing a provisional intercourse with that country. The former passed without much difficulty: in discussing the other,¹ some enlightened members gave opinions

Re-esta-
blishment
of commer-
cial inter-
course with
America.

¹ No apology is requisite for the following observations from one of the interesting political notes appended by Dr. Valpy to his sermons:—'In order to extend the limits of their legal trade, the islands of Jersey and Guernsey petitioned, in 1785, for permission to trade to the West Indies, and other parts of the British empire, with proper security to the revenue: this was refused by the minister, for

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which rectified the judgment of the house on the value of American commerce, and inculcated a proper regard for the British navigation law, the trade of the West Indies, and commercial intercourse with Russia and other nations. Much ability was shown, in the course of these debates, by Mr. Eden and lord Sheffield; the latter of whom rendered essential service to his country through the press, by imparting accurate and copious information, as well as liberal and sure maxims, respecting general policy and colonial principles:² finally, a temporary bill passed, which became annual, abrogating the requisition of a manifesto, certificate, or other document from American ships, arriving at any British port, or clearing out there for any port in the United States; also vesting in his majesty the power of regulating all commercial proceedings. In the course of the summer, an order in council was issued, limiting the commerce between America and the West Indian islands to ships British built: this was conformable to the great principle of the navigation act; and though it gave offence to the Americans, they could not with reason complain that they were precluded from the advantages of dependence and independence at the same time.

Provision
for Ameri-
can loyal-
ists.

Another subject which claimed attention was the case of the American loyalists; and parliament was told in the course of the session that they would be obliged to quit their country for ever, in order to avoid the resentment of enraged republicans. Congress, indeed, literally fulfilled the terms of the provisional articles in their behalf; but the recommendation was

a reason which displayed a remarkable instance of caution and prudence:—*because it might lead to consequences which he could not at that time foresee!* What added to the mortification of the islands was, that they had lately seen a proposal in parliament, to admit the Americans, aliens as they were, to the full enjoyment of that trade, which was denied to them. A bill had been introduced by Mr. Pitt, which, according to the expression of lord Sheffield, 'had it passed into a law, would have affected our most essential interests in every branch of commerce, and in every part of the world; would have deprived of their efficacy our navigation laws, and undermined the whole naval power of Britain.' Happily this bill was rejected in consequence of an event, which the state of parties had made necessary; the coalition of two great statesmen, who were assailed by all the weapons of obloquy, because, to use the words of an elegant writer, they had abjured their mutual animosity, without waiting for the consent of the public.'—*Sermons*, vol. ii. p. 65.

² Adolphus, vol. iii. p. 489.

so cold and formal, as to be utterly disregarded in the states; and the care of providing for these destitute and unfortunate persons devolved on the mother country: accordingly, an act was passed, appointing commissioners to inquire into their claims. The grounds of remuneration were losses of real or personal property, and of income arising from office, profession, or trade: the amount of the first species of claims exceeded £10,000,000 sterling, from which certain small deductions were made; and the liquidations took place by instalments, interest being allowed on the capital: the second list of claimants demanded £150,000 per annum; of which £120,000 were allowed, and vested in life annuities.

The new ministry was obliged, by the peculiar exigences of the times, to negotiate a loan of £12,000,000 for the service of the year, and to provide ways and means for paying the interest with unusual despatch: the terms, however, were arraigned with great severity; and it was shown, that abuses which had been so loudly charged on lord North's administration, were still adopted by his successors. The principal part of this loan was privately taken by eleven bankers; the remainder was distributed among monied men and private friends: but the negotiation no sooner transpired, than it raised a violent outcry: Pitt headed the opposition to it in the house of commons, and demonstrated that the holders of the loan had no less a bonus than six per cent.; which actually rose to eight per cent., before the bargain was completed: he very justly complained of the absence of competition; and lord Shelburne, in the house of lords, showed that the national loss amounted to the sum of £650,000. The public want of confidence in ministers was unequivocally marked by a general fall in the funds: the three per cent. consols, which, when they came into office, were at seventy, declined in December to fifty-six; a fall, totally unprecedented in times of peace and tranquillity.

An act for imposing a small stamp-duty on receipts for money was rendered a means of exciting loud but

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unjust clamors; and a bill for making some economic reforms in the treasury offices, was carried by Pitt through the commons, but lost in the lords. In his speech on this subject, he gave a curious account of the extravagant abuses which had been disclosed. In the navy office it was denied that any fees were received; but on investigation, it was found that *gifts* were allowed to be taken; and one clerk, whose salary was £250 a year, received £2500 by such indirect means: contracts were made, which gratified the government and the country by their apparently low terms; but it was discovered, that the officers, appointed to see the execution of them, were in the pocket of the contractors: of all abuses, however, those connected with the furniture of public offices were the greatest; there being evidence, that houses both in town and country were fitted up most extravagantly at the public expense: rooms were papered with the public stationery, the annual charge for which was £18,000; one item in it being £340 for whip-cord. It has been observed, that Mr. Pitt might have made statements on this subject still more ludicrous, and no less true:³ for a man of large fortune, and member of parliament, was publicly mentioned, who, on being made a lord of trade, gave an order for a superfluous of pewter ink-stands for his own use; which, when they were brought, he exchanged with the dealer for a handsome one of silver: encouraged by this prosperous dexterity, he ordered green velvet enough to make a court dress, under pretence of bags for his official papers; and it is said, that his correspondents could recognise in his letters the office paper, full ten years after the board of trade itself was no more. Mr. Pitt's bill, however, was rejected; as also was one introduced by lord Mahon to prevent bribery and corruption at elections; and alderman Sawbridge's annual motion for a reform in parliament met with its usual fate.

East India
affairs.

The very critical situation of our affairs in the East early engaged the attention of parliament. The hour

³ See Blackwood's Magazine, No. CCXXXIII. p. 482.

of commons had appointed a select committee to consider the state of British dominions in India; and in the prosecution of this important inquiry, it was discovered that the administration of justice in Bengal had been perverted to the base purposes of speculation, plunder, and oppression; while corruption, fraud, and injustice pervaded every department of our Indian government. Such discoveries produced a general union of opinion among public men, respecting the immediate necessity of some effectual step, to rescue the British name from disgrace, and to secure our territorial possessions. To this representation of defects and abuses in the Indian government, succeeded a disclosure of the ruined state of the company's finances, by a bill which sir Henry Fletcher introduced, 'for suspending all payments of the company now due to the exchequer, and enabling them to borrow the sum of £300,000 for their farther relief.' Lord John Cavendish declared this bill to be only a branch of a larger plan; and that it was brought forward separately, in order to answer an exigency which did not admit of delay.

In the upper house, lord Fitzwilliam dwelt on the desperate situation of the company, and affirmed, 'that unless the act passed, their bankruptcy would be inevitable: their expenditure had far exceeded their revenue; bills had been drawn on them, which they could not answer without a temporary supply; so that their very existence depended on the success of this act;' which accordingly passed both houses with little difficulty or opposition.

Mr. Pitt had not yet given up his patriotic schemes for reforming parliament: probably at this time he little suspected that he should live to be so strongly opposed to a measure which he now advocated; but allowance must be made for the difference of times and circumstances, as well as for the different situation of the advocate himself. A member of opposition who is aiming at political power, and a minister who is obliged to bribe the aristocracy of a kingdom, see things under a very different aspect; and a man,

Mr. Pitt's
plan for
parliament-
ary reform.

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would not hesitate to light a faggot in a foul chimney for the purpose of cleansing it, would refrain from doing so, if a barrel of gunpowder were in the way.

The former motion made by this gentleman, for an inquiry into the state of our representation, having been rejected, he brought forward, on the seventh of May, a specific plan, comprised in three resolutions: first, to adopt measures for preventing bribery and expense at elections; secondly, when the majority of voters in a borough should be convicted of corruption, to disfranchise the place, and allow to the uncorrupted minority votes for the county; thirdly, to add 100 members to the counties, and abolish a proportionate number of small obnoxious boroughs. The revival of this important subject, which had deeply agitated the public mind, produced an animated debate; in the course of which, the discordant sentiments of ministers did not fail to resuscitate indignation against the 'ill-starred coalition.' Lord North opposed the motion; and, in a strain of pleasant allusion, declared, 'that while some, with Lear, demanded a hundred knights, and others, with Goneril, were content with fifty; he, with Regan, exclaimed, 'No, not one.'

Fox, whose opinion on this great national question was totally at variance with that of his brother secretary, honorably preferred the consistency of public character to every other consideration. 'In his opinion, the constitution required innovation and renovation: its nature exposed it to change; and he thought that one of its chief excellences was a capability of renewed improvements: it might thus, he thought, be gradually carried to perfection.'

While this discussion exposed the absurdity of one coalition, it is remarkable that it paved the way for another almost as extraordinary. The lord advocate of Scotland, who had all along distinguished himself by his zeal for high prerogative, suspended on the present occasion his natural sentiments, became at once a convert to the doctrine of reform, and asserted his intire approbation of Mr. Pitt's resolutions. He

stood up boldly as an advocate of the people; and affirmed, 'that a compliance with their wishes would be the happiest means of putting an end to their complaints, and would certainly pour an infusion of pure blood into the constitution of the house of commons.' This unexpected support and patriotic effusion effected a cordial union between these two celebrated characters; but the resolutions were lost by a majority of 293 to 149.

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Though ministers would not countenance Pitt's comprehensive plan of economy; yet, observing the popularity which he had acquired by his exertions, they thought something ought to be attempted by themselves: accordingly, at the end of June, lord John Cavendish carried a bill through the house for abolishing certain offices in the exchequer, and limiting the salaries of others, after the death of present possessors: he also, in consequence of a motion made five months before by Mr. Pitt, presented to the house a book, containing a list of accountants, who having received public money by way of imprest, and on account, had not yet given in the same; also of those persons from whom balances of declared accounts were still due; by which it appeared that the sums unaccounted for amounted to upwards of £44,000,000! this induced Mr. Pitt to move an address to the king, requesting him to take effectual measures for the recovery of these immense sums, and to prevent in future similar delinquences: though strongly objected to by persons in office, it was at last suffered to pass with a few unimportant amendments. In this manner did the son of Chatham lay the foundation of a popularity, which enabled him to beat down the forces of the coalition, and to rescue his sovereign from that thralldom which so chafed his royal spirit.

A bill for regulating the trade of the African company being introduced toward the end of the session, with a clause prohibiting its officers from exporting negroes, that respectable body of people called quakers, embraced this opportunity of petitioning the house of commons, to extend the clause in question to all per-

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Settlement
on the
prince of
Wales.

sons whatsoever, and rescue a nation professing christianity from such a temptation to counteract the principles of humanity and justice: this petition, strongly exciting attention both in the house and in the public, laid the foundation of those generous and persevering exertions, which have at length effected the abolition of our detestable traffic in human flesh.

The only remaining subject of parliamentary importance was a message from the king to both houses, requesting means to provide a separate establishment for the prince of Wales. In the debate which followed, on the twenty-fifth of June, lord John Cavendish informed the house, that his majesty had graciously determined to take on himself the annual expense, and allow the prince £50,000 a year out of the civil list; but as his own revenues were barely sufficient, it could not excite surprise that he applied to parliament for aid to equip the heir apparent at his outset in life; and his lordship concluded with moving, that the sum of £60,000 should be granted for that purpose. In the course of debate, lord North was attacked for having endeavored to persuade the cabinet to propose a much larger sum; and his majesty was complimented by some members for showing such regard to the peculiar distresses of his people: as the coalition ministry included the confidential friends of the prince, they wished to give him the same settlement, of £100,000 per annum, as some preceding princes of Wales had received: but the king professed himself unwilling, at the close of a disastrous and expensive war, when economy was loudly called for, to increase the public burdens by so large a sum, which would only serve to gratify the rapacity of parasites, without adding to his son's personal dignity or comfort.

Though the argument was plausible, it was thought by many that this was an ill-judged parsimony; which, by placing the prince in a worse situation than that of former heirs apparent, would not only excite unpleasant feelings in the mind of his royal highness, as had been the case with his majesty's own father; but would probably subject him to many inconven-

niences and embarrassments: that it would therefore be more wise and economical to make at once a liberal provision, which might supersede the necessity of his incurring debts. On these grounds, ministers would have increased the allowance; but the king is said to have rejected the proposal with such expressions of marked resentment, that the resignation of the cabinet was for a time not improbable: his majesty's secret reason is supposed to have been a wish to show his son, that he, and not the minister, had a casting voice in this affair; and also to make him feel the consequence of his obnoxious association with Mr. Fox.⁴ The prince however gave a strong proof of filial duty and public spirit; signifying his desire that the business should be left wholly to the king, and his readiness to accept whatever provision his majesty's wisdom and goodness might think most fit: his earnest wish was, that no misunderstanding should arise between the sovereign and his ministers, from any arrangement in which his personal interest alone was concerned.

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On the sixteenth of July, his majesty prorogued parliament, intimating his intention to call them together at an early period, in order to resume the consideration of East Indian affairs, which would demand their serious and unremitted attention: he also expressed regret that he could not announce the completion of the definitive treaties: very little difficulty, however, ensued on this score, except in the case of Holland, from whom Great Britain wished to gain some compensation for her losses: the courts of Vienna and Petersburg were admitted to mediate, more for the sake of compliment than necessity; for the compacts were arranged without their aid, though formally sanctioned by the attestation of their ministers. Holland, through the influence of France, acceded on

Review
of foreign
states.

⁴ It is said that his majesty was at this time fortified against the inconvenience of a ministerial resignation, by the promise of lord Temple to undertake the government. He is also reported to have expressed his consent to the increase of the prince's income, on one condition,—that of an immediate marriage; the proposed bride being a niece to the queen: but to this measure his royal highness gave a peremptory refusal.

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the second of September to preliminaries of peace, by which all conquests on both sides were to be restored, except the town of Negapatam in the East Indies, which was to remain in the possession of Great Britain: the definitive treaties with France, Spain, and America were executed on the following day; and thus terminated a war which led to consequences more extensive and important than any other in modern times. Not the least of these was the foundation of an empire on the other side of the Atlantic; an empire of Europeans not belonging to the European system; independent in its own power and productions, and at the same time called on by its situation to take an active and large share in the general commerce of the world; yet without the necessity of standing armies, and without the aid of cabinet policy!⁵ The anticipations of Great Britain in this contest were wholly frustrated: she met with constant and final defeat where she expected easy and early victory; while she added more than £100,000,000 to her debt by means that were intended to augment her revenue: but on the other hand, none of those gloomy forebodings of ill, respecting a dismemberment of the empire, were verified. Every maritime power was anxious to form commercial treaties with the new states; but these, being destitute of capital, naturally went where the longest credit would be given: hence British commerce became far greater when free, than it had ever been when restricted: nor was its progress much less aided by the decline of Holland; whose trade, being once overthrown, never acquired sufficient strength to sustain the powerful competition of its rival. Thus the blows struck at England's prosperity were quickly healed; and the separation of her colonies was found to be like that of a branch from a tree, which soon recovers its loss in a statelier growth and deeper luxuriance: her success in the contest could only have postponed an inevitable event, and prepared another struggle for a time when she was less able to sustain it: in a few

⁵ Heeren's *European States-system*, vol. ii. p. 98.

years, the increase of the colonies might have rendered them a fatal appendage; for the mere patronage of their offices would have set the minister above the constitution. Instead of a union of consent, the two countries might have seen for some time a union of corruption; but the arrear of ill would have been to be paid; and the connexion might have been severed by some dreadful explosion that would have reduced both to ruin. Besides, although England had lost her ancient colonial possessions, she still retained her new territories in Canada and Nova Scotia; the value of which became greater, as they became objects of greater care: nor were these possessions of less importance to America than to England: as their acquisition had been the germ of colonial independence, so afterwards they discharged a new function in maintaining the confederacy of the United States, agreeably to the general law of political associations. The greatest evils arising from the contest fell where they were justly merited, on our enemies: the part taken in this war by the French monarchy involved it in those financial difficulties, and inflamed that republican spirit, which hastened its dissolution: Spain, disappointed in every indemnification proposed to her, remained in a state of inert paralysis, a miserable appendage of France her evil genius, and reduced to depend chiefly for support on the contributions of individuals; while Holland soon discovered the truth of a prophecy by Van Beuning, her old patriotic supporter against the attacks of Louis XIV., that whenever she should forego her connexion with England, she might date from that day the loss of her political importance.⁶ All her colonies, taken by Great Britain, and recaptured by France, remained a deposit in the hands of that crafty power to ensure the obedience of its ally: thus plundered of her settlements, and without any compensation for her commercial ruin, she remained a discontented witness of the increasing prosperity of Ostend; which town had risen to importance through the freedom granted to its port by the emperor, who contrived

⁶ Adolphus, vol. iii. p. 509.

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to draw this advantage from his neutrality. Joseph indeed no longer pursued the system of resisting encroachments made by great states on the political balance of Europe; for he had adopted the unworthy policy of combining with Russia to assail the weak, and to profit by spoliation. A joint attack on Turkey was meditated by these two powers; and their eager desire to avoid offence in this pursuit brought on a tacit renunciation of the new naval code: its principles were indeed mentioned by the mediators of the definitive treaty; but Mr. Fitzherbert, admonished by sir James Harris,⁷ resisted the introduction of the system, and convinced the French minister that it was no less injurious to the interests of France than to those of England.

Reception
of Mr.
Adams at
St James's.

Soon after the definitive treaty with the United States was signed, the interesting spectacle was exhibited of an American envoy introduced at the court of St. James's. The manner in which his majesty addressed Mr. Adams, who came in this character from his revolted colonies, afforded a lively illustration of that probity of mind, as well as of that invincible pertinacity, which so strongly characterised George III. 'As I was the last man in my kingdom,' he said, 'who assented to the recognition of American independence; so, now it is actually established, will I be the last man in my kingdom to violate it.'

Affairs of
America.

With regard to America, she had much more to contend with than her deserted parent. England, protected by a constitution well adapted to the preservation of monarchical government and civil liberty, had only to preserve that constitution inviolate, in order to repair all losses, and increase her greatness: but with America the case was very different; her prospect of peace and independence was clouded by the abject poverty of the country, and fears for the course which might be taken by the army, when its reduction became necessary: for a long time it had been supported by temporary expedients; and throughout the last year almost all the receipts of the treasury had been devoted to its subsistence: to pay the troops

⁷ Adolphus, vol. iii. p. 510.

was impossible; yet public faith had been pledged, not only to this, but to grant half-pay during life to the officers: that pledge had retained them in the field to the ruin of their private affairs; but it appeared more than probable, that when they should be disbanded, the funds for such purposes would never be supplied, since the requisite number of 'sovereign states' had not concurred in the measure.

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As negotiations for peace advanced, the irritation of the troops increased; and then commenced those civil services rendered by Washington to his country, which even equalled the glories of his military career: that great man foresaw the gathering storm; and determining to remain with his army, gave the weight of his influence to preserve the tranquillity of the state: in a private letter to the secretary of war, after expressing his conviction that the officers would return to private life with alacrity, could they be placed in suitable circumstances, he adds;—'When I see such a number of men, goaded by a thousand stings of reflection on the past, and anticipation of the future; about to be turned into the world, soured by penury, and what they call the ingratitude of the public; involved in debt, without one farthing to carry them home, after having spent the flower of their days, and many of them their patrimonies, in establishing the independence of their country; and having suffered every thing which human nature is capable of enduring on this side death;—I repeat it, when I reflect on these irritating circumstances, unattended by any thing to soothe their feelings, or brighten the gloomy prospect;—I cannot avoid apprehending that a train of evils will follow, of a very serious nature.'

Services of
Washington.

In December, 1782, the important crisis approached. A general opinion prevailed, that congress possessed neither power nor inclination to fulfil its engagements; and the officers, desirous of removing the obnoxious features of the half-pay establishment, without giving up their own rights, solicited payment of the money actually due to them, and a commutation of the half-pay for a gross sum: three months passed away with-

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out any prospect of accommodation, until intelligence of the peace arrived; when the existing irritation seemed to require only a slight impulse to induce the army either to make an imperious demand of justice, or to assume the power of redressing its own grievances. A convention of officers was called by an anonymous notice; and an address was privately circulated among the troops, highly calculated to inflame their passions, while it 'courted the auspices, and invited the direction of their illustrious leader:' but the patriotism of that great man was elevated far above the ambition which might have influenced a less noble spirit: at that moment the destinies of his country were in his keeping: but, strong in resolution and in action, he averted the threatened evil; and he, who had led his army into battle with the enthusiasm of a hero, disbanded it with all the calmness and fortitude of a philosopher.

On the fourth of December, he bade adieu to his officers at New York; into which place he had made a triumphant entry when the royal army was withdrawn. The enthusiastic rejoicings on that occasion being concluded, the companions of his warfare, endeared to their commander by years of intercourse in weal and woe, in peril and in triumph, accompanied him as far as the Hudson: but when his barge quitted its shore, and he waved his hat, bidding them a last adieu, their feelings were too intense for utterance; they replied only with suppressed sobs or with silent tears.

In every town and village through which the general passed, he was received with demonstrations of joy, and gratitude. When he arrived at Annapolis, where congress was sitting, he announced his intention of resigning his command to those from whom he had received it, referring to them the mode in which it should be done: they unanimously resolved that it should be in a public audience; and when the appointed day arrived, the hall of the senate was crowded with personages of the highest merit and distinction. Washington then, addressing the president, in a speech

remarkable for its dignified simplicity, 'demanded leave to surrender into the hands of government the sacred trust committed to his care; and, having finished the work assigned him, to retire from the great theatre of action to the tranquil scenes of private life; earnestly recommending the interests of his dear country, and those who had the keeping of them, to the holy protection of Almighty God.' To this address the president replied in words of the following import: — 'The United States, assembled in congress, receive, with emotions too affecting for utterance, the solemn resignation of that authority under which you have led our troops with success through a perilous and doubtful war. Called by your country to defend its invaded rights, you accepted the sacred charge before it had formed alliances, and while it was without friends, or a government that could support you: you have conducted the great military contest with wisdom and fortitude, invariably regarding the rights of the civil power through all disasters and changes: you have, by the love and confidence of your fellow-citizens, enabled them to display their martial genius, and transmit their fame to posterity: having defended the standard of liberty in this new world, having taught a lesson useful to those who inflict and to those who feel oppression, you retire with the blessings of your country; but the glory of your virtues will not terminate with your military command; it will continue to animate the remotest ages. May the Almighty foster a life so beloved with his peculiar care; and may your future days be as happy, as your past have been illustrious.'

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The ideas which crowded on the imagination both of the general and the president almost deprived them of the power of utterance; nor could the audience fail to exhibit strong emotions at the sublime spectacle of a triumphant warrior, in the fulness of his fame, divesting himself of his power, and depositing his laurels on the altar of his country.

Immediately after his resignation, the late commander hastened, to use his own words, 'with ineffable

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Washing-
ton elected
president.

delight,' to his seat at Mount Vernon; where as much domestic happiness as can fall to the lot of man awaited him: but the country was not at rest; and the skill, and wisdom, and virtue of the chief had been too deeply interested in all that concerned it, to allow him to withdraw intirely from public affairs. While the general government was dependent on the separate action of thirteen independent states, it could neither be consistent nor tranquil; and it was soon discovered that the whole fabric must fall to ruin, or a new system be adopted: on this subject, however, there was a diversity of opinion, which excited tumults and insurrections; until a convention was at length held at Philadelphia by the representatives of twelve states; and Washington was unanimously chosen president: then, after a session of about four months, the present federative constitution was framed; and Washington, by the voice of the nation, was placed at its head, the first president of the United States. 'I wish,' said he, with his characteristic modesty, 'that there may not be reason for regretting the choice; for, indeed, all I can promise, is to accomplish what can be done with an honest zeal:' two days afterwards, he bade adieu to Mount Vernon; and his progress to New York was marked by every demonstration of public veneration and affection. The manner of his reception at Trenton was peculiarly appropriate: the bridge was covered with a triumphal arch, supported by thirteen pillars entwined with flowers and laurel, and bearing on the front, in large gilt letters, *The protector of the mothers will be the defender of the daughters*:⁸ and there were assembled the mothers and the daughters, clothed in white, each bearing a basket of flowers to strew the path which their illustrious defender trod, while they sang a chorus in praise of his noble deeds.

On the twenty-third of April, 1789, the inauguration of the president took place; but his government commenced under the pressure of numberless embarrassments; an empty treasury, millions of debt, domestic agitations, and foreign intrigue: he took the

* American Portrait Gallery; Life of Washington.

only way of remedying these evils by filling the departments with able men, selected with a sole reference to the public good; many of whom he drew from their retirement by the most earnest and pathetic exhortations.

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Though the constitution had been adopted by a majority of the people in all the states, yet a strong party still continued jealous of the union, and attached to state-sovereignty: men of the highest talents and integrity were divided in opinion on this fundamental principle, notwithstanding all the improvements in the condition of the country. A few years of domestic prosperity and tranquillity might have allayed this excitement; but the turn of European affairs soon gave to it a new impulse and a wider range. The French revolution burst out, and excited in all the states a strong desire to assist their ancient ally in the contest that ensued; but the firmness and prudence of Washington preserved his country from a destructive war, though it was long doubtful whether even the weight of his influence would be able to stem the tide of popular inclination.

When the time for a new election arrived, he was re-elected president; and at the call of his country again surrendered his tranquillity; risking popularity and influence, as he had before risked life and fortune, when all might be lost, and nothing personal gained. Of the wisdom of his measures, and of the honest manner in which he executed his trust, every year bore ample testimony; while foreign powers were taught, no less than the Americans, that they might rely on his integrity. When his second term of office expired, he declined a re-election; and with an anxiety worthy of his exalted character, drew up a valedictory address, earnestly imploring his countrymen to guard against foreign influence, to avoid party spirit, and to cherish an inviolable attachment to the union, as the support of tranquillity at home and peace abroad: he also laid it down as a political axiom, that national prosperity never can prevail independently of national virtue. Washington then retired to the peaceful

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His death.

shades of Mount Vernon; where, after a little more than two years spent in agricultural employments, and in liberal hospitality to the numerous visitors who came thither with the homage of their respect and gratitude, the fiat went forth, which called the 'Father of his Country' to his high reward in a better world. To crown the glory of Washington, he was a sincere and pious christian: a few hours before his dissolution, he said, 'he was not afraid to die;' and the last effort of the chief corresponded with the more than Roman character of his life: raising himself up, and casting a benign look on all around him, as if acknowledging their kind attentions, he composed his limbs, folded his arms on his bosom, and yielded up his breath with the placidity of an infant.

Proceed-
ings of the
coalition
ministry.

From the contemplation of this illustrious character, we must return to notice some remarkable events in the affairs of England. The king made no secret of his sentiments respecting the coalition ministry: in an audience given to the duke of Portland at its formation, his majesty declared, that, feeling the new arrangements to be altogether compulsory on him, although he would not refuse his signature to any act presented to him officially by ministers, yet the responsibility of advising measures must rest solely with themselves; and his displeasure was still more distinctly marked by the declaration, that he would not create any British peers at their recommendation. Fox, in particular, had offered such personal offence to the king, that he did not even make an attempt at reconciliation; and as he was conscious of having lost his hold on the people by his ill-fated coalition, he determined to signalise himself by some great measure, which might have the effect of restoring his popularity and consolidating his power: under these circumstances, with the assistance of Burke, he concocted his celebrated bill for the government of India. It is not necessary to charge him with any intention of rendering himself independent of king and people by this measure, though it bore the stamp of an arbitrary as well as of an energetic mind; and would have imparted to the

legislature a power unknown to the constitution. The administration of our vast Indian territories could scarcely be conducted worse than it had hitherto been: the evil was universally acknowledged; and the necessity of a remedy was proved by the passing of Pitt's bill, so soon afterwards, with the additions made to it from time to time. For the reformation of such extensive abuses as were proved to exist, it was requisite to establish a new and extensive authority at home; and Fox's cabinet might naturally think it more safe and constitutional to entrust this power to parliamentary commissioners, than to the crown, whose influence it had been the grand object of that party to diminish.

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Parliament assembled on the eleventh of November, when the king in a short but comprehensive speech called its attention to all practicable means of recruiting the strength and resources of the nation, of rendering the necessary revenue as little burdensome as possible to his subjects, and preventing numerous frauds which had been committed in its collection: but more especially, his majesty pointed out, as a principal object of their care, the situation of India. 'The utmost exertions of their wisdom,' he said, 'would be required to maintain and improve the valuable advantages derived from our Indian possessions, and to promote and secure the happiness of the native inhabitants.'

Meeting of
parliament.

The address passed without opposition. Mr. Pitt, in his speech on this occasion, expressed great approbation of the ends proposed by government, and promised his support; though he warned ministers, that it would not be sufficient to attempt measures of palliation, and of a temporary nature, such as would only increase the danger by removing it to a distance: he also expressed surprise that this important business had been so long deferred.

Mr. Fox, impressed with an exalted idea of Mr. Pitt's talents, declared that nothing could afford him more satisfaction as a minister, or exultation as a man, than to be honored with his praise and support: he approved of the principles which that gentleman had

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Mr. Fox's
India bill.

briefly sketched concerning the objects of future deliberation; acknowledged that our Indian affairs would no longer brook delay; and concluded with announcing, that on the eighteenth of November, he would propose a plan for the government of India.

On the day appointed, he moved for leave to bring in a bill which should vest the affairs of the East India company in the hands of certain commissioners, for the benefit of the proprietors and the public. The plan was marked by all the characteristics of his ardent, daring, and luminous mind. A total derangement of the company's finances, and an utter incompetency to govern the vast territories, which had been by very questionable means obtained, was too evident to admit of contradiction: the evil was notorious; and difficult indeed was the task of devising an adequate remedy. This memorable bill proposed to take at once from directors and proprietors the administration of their territorial and commercial affairs; and to vest it in seven commissioners, named by the bill, and irremovable, except in consequence of an address from either house of parliament: these commissioners were to be assisted by a subordinate board of nine directors, to be chosen in the first instance by parliament, and afterwards by the proprietors.

The commissioners and directors were to enter immediately into possession of all lands, tenements, books, records, goods, and securities, in trust for the company: they were required to decide on every question within a limited time; or to assign a specific reason for delay: they were not to vote by ballot, and were in almost all cases to enter on their journals the reasons of their vote: they were to submit, once in every six months, an exact schedule of accounts to the court of proprietors; and at the beginning of every session to present a statement of their affairs to both houses of parliament. The bill was to continue in force four years; that is, till the year after the next general election; and it was accompanied by a second, enacting regulations for the future government of the Anglo-Indian territories: this took from the governor-

general all authority to act independently of his council; declared every existing British power in India incompetent to acquire or exchange any territory on behalf of the company; to sign any treaty of partition; to let out the company's troops, or appoint to office any person removed for misdemeanor: it prohibited all monopolies; and declared every illegal present recoverable by any individual for his own sole benefit. But that part of the bill, on which the greatest value seemed to be placed by its author, related to the zemindars, or native landholders, whom it secured in the possession of their respective inheritances; and defended from oppression: it particularly aimed at abolishing all vexatious or usurious claims that might be made on them; and therefore prohibited mortgages, and subjected every doubtful claim to the examination of the commissioners. It is scarcely possible to conceive the astonishment excited in the commons by the disclosure of this scheme: it was espoused with enthusiasm by the friends of administration, and attacked by their opponents with all the vehemence of indignation and the energy of invective: it was on one side extolled as a master-piece of genius, virtue, and ability; while on the other it was reprobated as a deep and dangerous design, fraught with mischief and ruin. Mr. Pitt distinguished himself on this occasion as a formidable adversary. He acknowledged that 'India wanted a reform, but not such a reform as this: the bill under consideration included a confiscation of the property and a disfranchisement of the members of the company; the influence which would accrue from it—a new, enormous, and unexampled influence,—was in the highest degree alarming. Seven commissioners, chosen ostensibly by parliament, but really by administration, were to involve in the vortex of their authority the patronage and treasures of India: the right honorable mover had acknowledged himself to be a man of ambition; and it now appeared that he was prepared to sacrifice king, parliament, and people at its shrine: he desired to elevate his present connexions to a situation, in

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which no political convulsions, no variations of power, might be able to destroy their importance, and terminate their ascendancy.' On the other hand, Mr. Fox, with surprising ability and eloquence, vindicated his measure. 'The arguments of its opponents,' he observed, 'might have been adopted with greater propriety by king James II., who might have claimed the property of dominion: but what had been the language of the people? No, you have no property in dominion;—dominion was vested in you, as it is in every chief magistrate, for the benefit of the community to be governed: it was a sacred trust delegated by compact: you have abused that trust; you have exercised dominion for the purpose of vexation and tyranny, not of comfort, protection, and good order; we therefore resume the power which was originally ours. But,' continued Mr. Fox, 'I am even charged with increasing the influence and power of the crown. Certainly, this bill as little augments the influence of the crown as any measure that could be devised for the government of India with the slightest promise of success: the very genius of influence consists in hope or fear; fear of losing what we have, or hope of gaining more: make the commissioners removable at will, and you set all the little passions of human nature afloat; invest them with power on the same tenure as that by which British judges hold their station—removable on delinquency, punishable on guilt, but fearless of danger if they discharge their trust—and they will then be liable to no seducement; but will execute their functions with glory to themselves, and for the common good of their country and of mankind. This bill presumes the possibility of bad administration; for every word in it breathes suspicion: it supposes that men are but men; it confides in no integrity; it trusts to no character: it annexes responsibility, not only to every action, but even to the inaction of the powers which it has created. He would risk,' he said, 'upon its excellence whatever was most dear to him, whatever men most valued in character and reputation; he would stake all on the consti-

tutional safety, the enlarged policy, the equity and wisdom of the measure: whatever, therefore, might be the fate of its authors, he had no fear but that it would produce to this country every blessing of commerce and revenue; while, by extending a generous and humane government over those millions whom an inscrutable Providence had placed under our government in the remotest regions of the earth, it would consecrate the name of England among the noblest of nations.' While the bill was pending in the commons, a petition was presented by the East India company, praying to be heard by counsel against its provisions, which they represented as subversive of their charter, and operating as a confiscation of their property, without charging against them any specific delinquency, without trial, and without conviction; a proceeding contrary to the most sacred privileges of British subjects. The city of London also took alarm, and presented a strong petition to the same effect; but it was carried rapidly through all its stages in the lower house by decisive majorities; the division, on the second reading, being 217 against 103; and on the ninth of December, Mr. Fox, attended by a numerous train of members, presented it at the bar of the lords.

Its second reading there took place on the fifteenth of December, when counsel was heard in behalf of the company; and on the seventeenth a motion was made that the bill be rejected; on which occasion lord Camden spoke with great ability against it as being highly pernicious and unconstitutional. To divest the company of the management of their own property and commercial concerns, was to treat them as idiots; and he viewed the measure, not so much in the light of a commission of bankruptcy, as of lunacy. But regarded as an engine to throw an enormous addition of weight into the scale, not of legal, but ministerial influence, it was still more alarming: were this bill to pass into a law, his lordship forcibly declared, we should see the king of England and the king of Bengal contending for superiority in the British parliament. After a vehement debate, its committal

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was negatived by ninety-five against seventy-six; and it was finally rejected without a division. Such was the concluding scene of an administration, from whose vigor its partisans had conceived the most sanguine hopes; and whose strength had been represented by its enemies to be so irresistible, that it would in its progress break down all the barriers of the constitution: but as the first divisions in the upper house were favorable to this bill, it will naturally be imagined that so sudden and remarkable a change of sentiment arose from the intervention of some adequate cause. Though it was generally known that very little cordiality or confidence subsisted between the king and his ministers, yet on this measure they had obtained his majesty's concurrence: doubts however were probably excited in the royal breast by the language of certain members, who, in the heat of debate, asserted that if the bill passed into a law, the crown would be no longer worth wearing; and that none would undertake to form an administration, when those who retired from office carried with them the patronage of India. The monarch began to think that he had been duped by his ministers; and earl Temple, in a conference with his majesty, so exposed the tendency of the measure to circumscribe the regal prerogative, that he was allowed to circulate a declaration privately among the peers, to the effect that the king would consider any one who voted for it as his personal enemy: and if these words were not strong enough, his lordship was empowered to use whatever language he might deem more to the purpose.

So extraordinary an interference was not likely to pass without animadversion; for though the right of a peer, as an hereditary counsellor of the crown, to offer advice to his sovereign, is indisputable; yet to employ the king's name for influencing measures in parliament, was considered as unconstitutional: ministers, therefore, instructed Mr. William Baker to move a resolution, 'that to report any opinion, or pretended opinion, of his majesty on any bill, or other proceeding in either house of parliament, with a view to

influence the votes of its members, was a high crime and misdemeanour.' After an animated debate, the house divided on the question; and the resolution was carried by a majority of seventy-three: it was then resolved that the house should, in the following week, commence an inquiry into the state of the nation; and also, on the motion of Mr. Erskine, (whose eloquence at the bar had lately brought him into notice) that, as it was essential to the national interests, and peculiarly incumbent on the commons, to pursue the consideration of a remedy for abuses in the government of India, any person who should advise his majesty to prevent, or in any manner interrupt, the discharge of this great duty, should be deemed an enemy to his country. The king, however, influenced by his own feelings, as well as by the adversaries of the obnoxious coalition, resolved to disregard these votes, and to change his administration: on the day of debate, therefore, December 13, late in the evening, he sent a message to lord North and Mr. Fox, commanding them to deliver up their seals of office, and to send them to him by the under-secretaries; since a personal interview would be disagreeable to his majesty:⁹ having thus received the seals, he placed them next morning in the hands of lord Temple; who being sworn in as secretary, wrote letters of dismissal to the remaining ministers. Mr. Pitt was summoned to fill the highest office, which he had firmly refused nine months before: but the aspect of the times had changed; the cabinet was now low in public esteem; and king and lords had risen together to support the sovereign's authority: for it was clear, that if the ministry should force themselves back on him again, he must be a cipher for life. Still the difficulties of Pitt's situation might have appalled a less resolute mind: he had to face a majority in the house of commons rendered furious by their fall, and breathing out resentment against what they called the unconstitu-

Dissolution
of the cabi-
net, and
Mr. Pitt
prime
minister.

⁹ On this occasion, the night being very wet and boisterous, lord North is said to have exclaimed, with his characteristic pleasantry,—'What! turn us out in such a night as this! a dog would not have been so treated.'

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tional influence of the king's name: to increase his perplexities, lord Temple resigned office, under pretence of meeting more freely the charge of tampering with the royal confidence; though he knew it was one of those which, however well-founded, are hardly capable of direct proof: many other leading persons shrank from the responsibility of connexion with a cabinet, which it was predicted would not exist a month: so that the young premier became doubtful of the result, though he declared his fixed resolution not to abandon the position he had taken, or to desert his royal master. At length, the ministry was formed: the marquis of Carmarthen succeeded Mr. Fox, and lord Sidney was substituted for lord North: lord Thurlow was reinstated in the office of lord chancellor, and earl Gower made president of the council: the duke of Rutland took the privy seal, and the duke of Richmond again became master of the ordnance: the secretary at war was sir George Yonge; the admiralty was committed to lord Howe; and the office of treasurer of the navy was conferred on Mr. Dundas, in whom the minister found one of his most valuable auxiliaries: thus in doubt, anxiety, and difficulty commenced the most memorable administration recorded in our annals.

CHAPTER XXVII.

GEORGE III. (CONTINUED).—1783.

Situation of the king and the new minister—Mr. Pitt's determination not to dissolve the parliament—Reasons for that determination—Mr. Erskine's motion for an address to the king on the subject—His majesty's answer—Motion of lord Surrey respecting the duchy of Lancaster—Mr. Pitt's disinterested conduct regarding the clerkship of the pells—Domestic affairs—Conduct of the prince of Wales in the affair of Fox's India bill, &c.—Meeting of parliament—Great contest between Pitt and Fox for supremacy—Attempts made to produce a coalition between them fail—Firmness and moral courage of the king—The people favor his cause against the commons—This, added to Mr. Pitt's high character, occasions the triumph of that minister—Dissolution of parliament—Returns highly favorable to Mr. Pitt—Effect on different parties—The minister's difficult situation.

THE king experienced from the late change in his cabinet a relief and satisfaction of mind to which he had long been a stranger: he had sustained a harassing contest with the great whig families; but, in the last ministry, the man of the people and the representative of the aristocracy had coalesced against him: this very junction, however, effected what, perhaps, no other combination of circumstances could have produced; it subjected both to contempt, and deprived them of their main support in public opinion. The situation, however, of Mr. Pitt was environed with danger as well as with glory: though he had already placed himself foremost in debate; though his talents were universally acknowledged, and his integrity was above all suspicion; yet he rested solely on these qualifications; he was supported by no family influence

Difficulties
of Mr. Pitt.

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or political confederacy ; while the most formidable opposition ever known in the house of commons, both for numbers, connexions, and abilities, was arrayed against him : in all his motions, brought forward on the most patriotic motives, conducted with consummate skill, and enforced by a commanding eloquence, he had been decidedly beaten ; and the majorities continued almost equally strong against him, even after the dismissal of the coalition cabinet was foreseen ; his apparent presumption and youthful folly, in attempting to withstand this opposition, became an object of incessant ridicule in the house ; Fox contemptuously pronouncing it a political absurdity, unparalleled in the annals of immature ambition ; and staking his reputation for political foresight on the stoppage of all business under this shadow of a ministry. To make assurance doubly sure, opposition resolved to delay the land-tax bill then pending ; and without which neither the interest on our national debt could be paid, nor a dissolution of parliament hazarded : this measure, indeed, formed an anxious subject of deliberation with Mr. Pitt ; and, on consulting his friends, he found among them many who recommended a dissolution with great earnestness ; urging, as an argument, the anxiety shown by his antagonists to prevent it : but his powerful and reflecting mind soon determined otherwise. He saw that a premature and unsuccessful appeal to the nation might operate to his lasting disadvantage : numbers on the ministerial side might indeed be increased by a new election ; but the question was, could he obtain a majority over the great parliamentary interests opposed to him ? if not, it was better, both for himself and the country, that a dissolution should be avoided, or at least deferred. Public feeling had not yet expressed itself with satisfactory decision : the coalition, though stigmatised by all men of honor, had not yet excited scorn sufficient to overcome personal interests ; nor had the people been allowed time to analyse the unconstitutional principle and dangerous tendency of the East India bill : meanwhile skilful writings, disseminated among all

ranks, were gradually producing the desired effect:¹ both monied men and landholders began to feel alarm at the views of an ambitious confederacy; all those who were attached to, or dependent on the king, were exerting themselves against a set of men whom they knew to be odious to their sovereign; while the character of the new minister, free as it was from any imputation of vice or political inconsistency, and his late defence of chartered rights, so calculated to promote confidence in a mercantile country, were extending his popularity on the ruin of his opponents. Relying, therefore, upon the sense and honor of the nation, Mr. Pitt determined to make trial of the present parliament: if he failed, he would still have the power of dissolving it; with the advantage of showing, that an obstinate adherence to party had rendered it unfit to carry on the public business: if he succeeded, he would disarm his antagonists on their own ground; and proving how little they had been sustained by character, but how much by patronage and intrigue, would annihilate their political influence, as a party, for ever.

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The man who thus reasoned and thus acted, was scarcely more than twenty-four years old; at which age he undertook to support, almost unaided, the interests of the British empire: the overwhelming nature and importance of this charge may be estimated by some of the leading measures that awaited his return to parliament.² The regulation of the Indian government contended with that of the British revenue for his immediate attention: innumerable abuses were to be reformed in both; and their expenses to be brought, as far as possible, within the limits of their income: in the latter, particularly, an unfunded sum of £30,000,000 was to be provided for, new taxes raised, and a system for reducing the national debt arranged: the commercial intercourse with America, so long interrupted, was to be restored; discontents in Ireland to be allayed; and the interests of Great Britain,

¹ A treatise by sir William Pulteney was very efficacious in impressing on the public a detestation of the India bill, and a dread of its author.

² He was re-elected for the borough of Appleby.

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Efforts of
opposition.

threatened by continental nations, to be defended. Perhaps, no period in any statesman's life can be pointed out, presenting to view more obstacles and difficulties.

The first attack made against the new minister was on the twenty-second of December, when, the house being in committee on the state of the nation, Mr. Erskine moved an address to the king, 'praying that his majesty would not dissolve parliament, while the revenue of the country and affairs of the East India company required immediate attention; but that he would hearken to the voice of his faithful commons, rather than to the secret insinuations of particular persons, who had private interests to serve, separate from the true interests of the king and people.'

As Pitt's seat was still vacant in consequence of his ministerial appointment, the fury of this tempest fell principally on Mr. Dundas; but he had weathered too many rough gales in the house of commons to feel much alarm, though the ministerial vessel was then riding at single anchor. Mr. Bankes assured the house, that he was authorised by Mr. Pitt to say, that he disclaimed all thoughts of advising a dissolution: but Fox and lord North, though they relied on the honor of the premier, were not satisfied that such a measure might not be carried without his consent: Mr. Erskine, therefore, persevered in his motion, and carried it. The king's answer admitted the urgency of the subjects mentioned in the address, and assured the house that he would not interrupt its meetings by prorogation or dissolution; but the majority were not contented with this pledge, which went no farther than to their meeting after the recess: they proceeded therefore to take precautions against such an event; and passed a resolution prohibiting the lords of the treasury from accepting any more bills from India, till the company should prove satisfactorily that they had sufficient means for payment, after discharging current demands, and debts due to the public: thus the commons assumed to themselves authority to suspend an act of parliament, by which the lords of the treasury

were empowered to permit the directors, at discretion, to accept bills from India.

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A motion also was made and carried by lord Surrey for an address to his majesty, praying him not to grant the chancellorship of the duchy of Lancaster for any other term than during pleasure, before the twentieth of January following; the object of which was to prevent Mr. Pitt from bestowing it on one of his friends for life, as the marquis of Rockingham had given it to lord Ashburton: by another motion, the day of meeting after the Christmas recess was fixed for the twelfth of January; a proceeding, as much against the established practice of the house, as was the transacting of public business during the short but unavoidable absence of a newly appointed minister.

During the recess, an opportunity offered itself to Mr. Pitt of acquiring credit by a case of disinterested conduct. The clerkship of the pells, a very valuable place in the treasury, became vacant: but the first lord, whose private income was very small, and who had given up a lucrative profession at his entrance into political life, disdained to convert what fortune had thus cast before him, either to his own profit, or to the advancement of his ministerial influence: he gave it to colonel Barré, on condition of his resigning a pension nearly equal in value to the office in question: for this he was much blamed by lord Thurlow in the house of lords; but the premier had higher views than could enter into the comprehension of a rapacious lawyer: his was a nobler ambition than that of wealth; and he had too much sagacity not to perceive that he should increase his influence by this forbearance ten times as much as he could have done by promoting the advancement of any political adherent: in future times indeed he exhibited no such inclination to spare the public purse when the interests of his party were concerned.

On the third of May, prince Octavius died of the small-pox, at Kew; and on the seventh of August her majesty was delivered of her fifteenth and last

child, the princess Amelia. There being, as yet, no order of knighthood appropriated to Ireland, the king this year instituted that of St. Patrick, consisting of his majesty, as sovereign; the lord lieutenant for the time being, as grand master; and fifteen knights companions. On the eleventh of November, the prince of Wales took his seat in the house of peers: it was unfortunate for him and his friends that his first vote should be in favor of Mr. Fox's India bill; for the king seeing, or fancying he saw, an opposition organised against him, at the head of which was his son, expressed much concern that he should so soon take a leading part in political measures of such importance to our territorial possessions; on which the prince, with the full concurrence of Fox, retraced his steps, and did not appear again in the house during the agitation of that question: the whigs, however, were personally, as well as politically, odious to the king; and the friendship with which they were honored by the heir apparent, could not fail to be highly offensive to him, and produce that diminution of cordiality toward his son which was seen in many transactions. On several points, the breach that ensued bore a strong resemblance to that which had disturbed the preceding reign; for money was the chief cause of dissention: there was decided harshness and obstinacy on the part of his majesty; while the talents, wit, and accomplishments of those whom the heir apparent selected as companions, threw a splendor round the connexion, which hid the looseness of its texture even from their own observation.

Never was expectation more vivid than on the day of meeting after the recess, the twelfth of January, when Fox, at the head of opposition, was to show that no power in the constitution could withstand the commons of England. At an early hour, generally appropriated to business of routine, he took possession of the house, by moving the order of the day for the committee on the state of the nation: his speech on this occasion was interrupted by the arrival of many new members to take the oaths; after which ceremony,

Fox and Pitt rose at the same time, each demanding to be heard; the former, as being in possession of the house; the latter, as having a message from the king to deliver, respecting the removal of some German troops from America. The speaker, being appealed to, decided in favor of Fox; unless he would consent to waive his right: this, however, he contemptuously refused to do; and, declaring that the king's message might be delivered, after other business of great importance to the house, he moved the order of the day.

This motion gave Pitt an opportunity of speaking; when he manfully rebutted all the charges that had been made against him of back-stairs influence; defying calumny to bring forward a shadow of proof that he had condescended to use it. 'I have neither meanness enough,' said he, fixing his eyes on the opposition, 'to act under the concealed influence of others, nor hypocrisy to pretend, where the measures of an administration, in which I had a share, were blamed, that they were measures not of my advising; and this is the only answer I shall ever deign to make on the subject.' Fox now brought forward his prohibitory resolutions, forbidding the issue of any public money, after a dissolution or prorogation of parliament, unless the act of approbation had previously passed; and ordering the account of monies already issued to be laid before the house: these were followed by two motions from the earl of Surrey: first, 'that in the present state of his majesty's dominions, it was peculiarly necessary there should be an administration which had the confidence of the public;' and this was carried without a division: secondly, 'that the late changes in his majesty's councils were accompanied with circumstances new and extraordinary; such as did not conciliate the confidence of this house.' Mr. Dundas then moved 'that the chairman do leave the chair;' and a strenuous debate ensued; when the motion was negatived by 232 against 193; that of lord Surrey being carried without a division.

In the mean time, a fresh instance of the abuse of the king's name, to influence members, produced much

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excitement in the house. General Ross declared that one of the lords of the bedchamber called on him to say, with friendly expressions of fear and regret, that 'his name was on the list of Mr. Fox's faction;' and that, if he joined in the forthcoming vote of censure on ministers, he would be regarded as 'the king's enemy:' 'on which,' observed the general, 'I remonstrated against any such interference with my conscience, and the placing my name upon any such muster-roll.'³

Being beaten in a series of resolutions, two of which were directed against his continuance in office; opposed both by the aristocratic and popular parties in the house; obliged to contend against the most practised debaters and the most subtile politicians, with scarcely an official friend of ability to support him, except Dundas; Pitt appeared as if he were destined to descend from that high place which he had prematurely occupied; but he found resources in his own intrepid spirit, as well as in the moral courage of his royal master.

Firmness
of the king.

The king, during this memorable day, was at Windsor; but expresses were despatched to him almost every hour; and it is said that he did not go to rest the whole night: the result, communicated to him by the minister, produced a reply, couched in the following firm and dignified language:—

'Mr. Pitt cannot but suppose, that I received his communication of the two divisions in the long debate which ended this morning, with much uneasiness, as it shows the house of commons much more willing to enter into any intemperate resolutions of desperate men than I could have imagined: as to myself, I am perfectly composed, as I have the self-satisfaction of feeling that I have done my duty. Though I think Mr. Pitt's day will be fully taken up in considering, with the other ministers, what measures are best to be proposed in the present crisis; yet, that no delay may

³ It is said to have been the practice of George III. to write down the names of all whose persons or characters were known to him, in large folio registers; affixing to each the various merits or demerits of the individual, according to his own estimation of them.

arise from my absence, I will dine in town, and consequently be ready to see him in the evening, if he should think that would be of utility: at all events, I am ready to take any step that may be proposed to oppose this faction, and to struggle to the last period of my life; but I can never submit to throw myself into its power: if they in the end succeed, my line is a very clear one, to which I have fortitude enough to submit.' On this letter the fortune of the state now turned: nothing but a promise of the most decisive and uncompromising support could have retained the minister at the helm: the king's pledge, however, was given; and it is but just to say, that in no subsequent period of their connexion was it ever violated.

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On the evening appointed in the royal letter for a conference, Pitt received a renewal of his majesty's determination, and proceeded to the conflict in full expectation of a final triumph. On the fourteenth, he introduced his bill for the better government of India, on principles which would leave the commercial affairs of the company in their own hands; while it created a board of control, consisting of commissioners appointed by the king, and possessing a negative on all political proceedings: the commons, however, were still under the sway of Fox; who objected to the proposed measure, on the ground of its differing, in all its material provisions, from that which had lately received the approbation of the house; while the plan itself appeared partial and incomplete, an alleviation, not a remedy, for existing evils. Leave, however, was granted that it should be read for the first time on the following Friday; and the house adjourned.

The business of that day commenced with a petition from the county of York, presented by Mr. Duncombe, for a more equal representation of the people in parliament. Lord North, Mr. Burke, and Mr. Powys objected to the matter which it contained; but Pitt said, that soon after his introduction into the house of commons, he had professed himself friendly to parliamentary reform, and he still continued so:

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if any thing were wanting to confirm his opinion on this point, it might be found in the conduct which he had witnessed in that house for some weeks past; he would not, however, stand up for any species of innovation; though a temperate and moderate reform, temperately and moderately pursued, would at all times find an advocate in him.

On leave being given that the petition should be brought up, Pitt seconded the motion for its lying on the table; and this produced an observation from lord Surrey, that the freeholders of Yorkshire expected much more from him: they reposed great confidence in his talents; and as they did not suppose he had united himself with a cabinet hostile to reform, so they presumed on success in their application, since it would be supported by the whole weight of government: this he had been commissioned by a most respectable body of freeholders to communicate to the right honorable gentleman. With regard to himself, he also was a friend to reform; for he had seen the fatal consequences of that secret influence, which would not have dared to show itself, had the house of commons really consisted of the representatives of the nation. While he acknowledged the minister's eminent abilities and qualifications for office, he lamented that his appointment should be founded on secret influence, and that he should be joined with those who were the worst foes of the constitution.

Pitt, in his reply, declared, that he was thankful to the very respectable body of Yorkshire freeholders for their good opinion of him; but was at a loss to conceive where they learned, that he would never make part of a cabinet which should contain any member hostile to parliamentary reform. Perhaps it would be impossible ever to form such a cabinet; for so many different opinions existed on this subject, that he believed the country would remain without an administration, if it waited for unanimity: Fox agreed with him on this point, and the petition was ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. Pitt's
India bill.

The minister then presented his India bill, which

was read for the first time, and ordered to be printed; the second reading being fixed for the Friday following. The house afterwards resolved itself into a committee; when lord Charles Spencer moved a resolution, expressing 'the necessity of an administration that should have the confidence both of that house and of the country; which as the present ministers have not, their continuance in office is contrary to constitutional principles, and injurious to the interests of king and people.' Mr. Powys opposed this motion as premature, unprecedented, and unjust: though he spoke in high terms both of Pitt and Fox, he declared his disapprobation of the manner in which the former had come into office, and blamed the other for his coalition with lord North: he had long wished to see a union between these two eminent men; but thought that his lordship was a great obstacle to such an arrangement.

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Fox, in noticing this part of Mr. Powys's speech, said, 'that he did not court a union with any party; nor did he avoid it, when it could be formed on sound and general principles; and thus he had coalesced with lord North: but the present ministers had got into office by a conspiracy against the constitution: this charge however he thought proper to qualify, by a personal compliment to his antagonist:—'I venerate,' said he, 'the character of the young man who holds the reins of government at present; I admire his virtues, and respect his abilities.'

In the debate on this important motion, the aim of which was to overthrow the cabinet, the most remarkable speech was made by Mr. Dundas; who seized with peculiar force and energy on the main question—the right of the king to choose his ministers, and the unconstitutional attempt of the commons, not only to defraud the house of peers of its share in the public interests; but to force the sovereign, in defiance of his prerogative, to name such members of administration as they should select. After defending the appointment of the present men, and showing what would be the effect of passing the resolution now.

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proposed, he called on the independent part of the house to stand forth, and maintain its character and moderation. 'Let the house,' said he, 'look well to its conduct; for this night it is about to decide what is the constitution of the country. The assumption of power and privileges which did not belong to it once effected the overthrow of that constitution: we are verging toward the same precipice again; we are claiming to ourselves the right of appointing ministers; we are disclaiming his majesty's nomination, without cause and without trial.'

After several members had spoken, Pitt rose to declare, that he could not but feel comfort and satisfaction at the full and impartial discussion given to the question; and especially at the manner in which so many worthy and respectable men had rescued his character from the violence of faction and the malice of party: this discussion had incontestably proved, on the one hand, that the ingenuity of those, whose chief aim was to mislead and confound, had not been so successful as they possibly might have expected; and on the other, that there were many men of acknowledged estimation and importance in the country, who were not more accurate in judgment, than zealous in determination to tear the mask from the face of faction, and to show it in its native colors: this necessarily afforded him high gratification. He desired to throw himself on the candor, justice, and honor of the house; observing, that if the present motion should pass before the merits of his India bill were discussed, he would be condemned, unheard, untried, and unconvicted.

Violent
conduct of
the oppo-
sition.

The house, however, was still in the hands of his opponent, and the resolution was carried by 205 to 184: an adjournment then took place to the Tuesday following; on which day, several members having expressed an earnest wish to see a coalition between Pitt and Fox; the former declared that he was not averse to a union so strongly recommended by respectable and independent men; but he agreed intirely with the right honorable gentleman, that if not founded on principle, it would be fallacious, and produce dsunion

where it might be still more dangerous than within the walls of that house. In answer to Fox's assertion, that ministers held their places in defiance of parliamentary opinion, he declared, 'that nothing but a sense of his duty to the public kept him in office; out of which he could not at this moment go with so much honor as attended his coming into it.'

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Fox, though disconcerted because ministers had not resigned in consequence of lord Charles Spencer's resolution, doubted how far he should be supported in any personal question, and thought it better not to hazard another motion in committee till the fate of his antagonist's India bill should be decided; on Friday, therefore, he opposed the commitment of that bill, in a long speech; comparing it with his own, which he studiously represented as the bill of the commons; Pitt replied to the objections of Fox and others, but was defeated; but by a majority of only eight; the numbers being 222 against 214. Elated by this victory, Fox moved, the same night, for leave to bring in a bill for the regulation of Indian affairs; which in its principles, as he informed the house, would be similar to his former one. Leave being given, he called on the minister to declare explicitly whether it was intended to prevent its progress by a dissolution of parliament: Pitt, however, kept his seat; nor could he be provoked to speak by the successive attacks of different members; or by the imputation of preserving 'a sulky silence,' thrown out by Fox; until general Conway rose in great warmth, and called on him to explain his conduct for his own honor. 'The present ministry,' said the gallant officer, 'originating in darkness and secrecy, maintain themselves by artifice and reserve: they exist by corruption; and are now about to dissolve parliament, after sending their agents round the country to bribe the electors.' Pitt then rose; but it was to call the last speaker to order; desiring him to specify the instances where ministerial agents had corrupted voters: this was an assertion which he could not prove, and therefore he ought not to have made it. 'No arguments,' said he, loftily, 'however artful, no

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strong words thrown out with a view to put me off my guard, shall draw me aside from that purpose, which, on mature deliberation, I have formed: individual members have no right to call on me for replies to questions involving in them great and important considerations; nor is it incumbent on me to answer interrogatories put in the harsh language that has been used. Then, turning to general Conway, and rebuking him for intemperate expressions, which he was determined not to imitate; he slightly touched on that difference of age, which might have justified intemperance on one side, while it should have produced gravity and moderation on the other; and he concluded with one of those electrifying quotations from the classics with which his memory was well stored, though he was generally forbearing in their use; addressing the aged general in the words of Scipio to Fabius—‘*Si nulla alia re, modestia certe, et temperando linguam, adolescens senem vicero.*’

The leading members of opposition still continued their demands; but neither the violence nor the dexterity with which these were put, nor the threats with which they were accompanied, had any effect on the minister, who persisted in his imperturbable silence. At length, Fox, despairing to obtain information, rose to express his astonishment and indignation at what he termed an insult to the house; and concluded by moving an adjournment to the morrow, though that was Saturday; when he hoped members would attend to take measures for vindicating the honor and asserting the privileges of the commons: at two o’clock, therefore, in the morning, they adjourned.

Next day, the house was uncommonly full; but all preparations for debate ended in a speech from Mr. Powys; whose tears, (for with them he accompanied it,) were unable to draw more from Pitt, than a promise that parliament should not be dissolved before Monday; to which day the house adjourned.

The lords kept aloof from personal conflicts; being anxious to avoid a revival of that struggle between the two houses, which had caused so much mischief in the

last century; but they took an early opportunity of expressing an opinion on this great question; for on the fourth of February, the earl of Effingham moved two resolutions; first, that an attempt in any one branch of the legislature to suspend the execution of law, by separately assuming to itself a discretionary power, was unconstitutional; secondly, that authority for appointing persons to the great offices of executive government, is vested solely in his majesty; on whose wisdom, in the exercise of this prerogative, the house places the firmest reliance. The former of these was carried by a majority of 100 to 53; the latter passed without a division: both were then embodied in an address, which was presented to his majesty; and the king, in his answer, emphatically declared 'that he had no object in the choice of ministers, but to call into his service men who best deserved the confidence of parliament and of the public in general.'

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His majesty, who wrote to Mr. Pitt on the day when the motion for this address was expected, after lamenting the lengths to which the commons had gone, thus expressed himself:—'I trust the house of lords will feel that the hour is come, for which the wisdom of our ancestors established that respectable corps in the state, to prevent either the crown or the commons from encroaching on the rights of each other: indeed, should not the lords stand boldly forth, this constitution must soon be changed; for if the two sole remaining privileges of the crown are infringed on, that of negativing bills which have passed both houses of parliament, and that of naming the ministers to be employed;—I cannot but feel, as far as regards my own person, that I can be no longer of utility to this country, nor continue with honor in the land.'

As the rejection of the premier's India bill led his antagonists to expect an immediate dissolution of parliament, so it induced him to consider the expediency of resorting to that measure; for which he wanted not inducements. The contest between himself and his rival was beginning to excite much attention; and public admiration increased daily at the bold resist-

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ance made by so young a minister to the whole force of opposition; as well as at the ability of his defence, and the resources which he displayed: this favorable disposition of the public also began to show itself in addresses, thanking his majesty for removing the late ministers from power, and declaring a firm resolution to support him in the legal exercise of his prerogative: under such circumstances, the subject of a dissolution was urged on Mr. Pitt by his friends, and the measure was recommended by the highest authority. 'The opposition,' said his majesty,⁴ 'will throw every impediment in our way: but we must be men; and if we mean to save the country, we must cut those threads which cannot be unravelled: half measures are ever puerile, and often destructive.'

The admirable judgment, however, of Mr. Pitt prevented any hasty decision; and though a dissolution would have relieved him from grievous difficulties, he determined to wait till he could make an appeal to the nation with perfect confidence. The India bill had infused a disrelish and distrust of the adverse party into a large portion of the community; and he saw that the country was awakening to a lively interest in the great question at issue; that the nature of it would soon be more generally understood; and that if Fox were permitted to pursue his course some time longer, he would, by precipitate measures, alienate the public mind effectually from his cause: then a dissolution would not only displace the party, but probably keep them out of office for a long period: at present, however, there was danger in the attempt for if the same members should be returned to a new parliament, the king probably would go to Hanover, and Mr. Pitt to the Tower.

Fruitless
attempts
to form a
coalition.

At this time, while the current was still running violently against the obnoxious minister, he obtained a respite which was of great advantage to his cause: during the debates, frequent wishes had been expressed for a union between the leaders on both sides of the house; and to promote this object, a meeting

⁴ In a letter to Mr. Pitt, dated the twenty-fifth of this month.

was held at the St. Albans tavern, by a large body of independent members, who sent a deputation to Mr. Pitt and the duke of Portland, earnestly requesting them to communicate with each other, for the purpose of rescuing the country from its distracted state. To this proposal the minister replied, 'that he should be happy to co-operate with so respectable a meeting, in forming a more extended administration, if it could be done with principle and honor.' The duke, as the organ of opposition, answered in a more imperious tone; 'that he should think himself happy in obeying the commands of so respectable a meeting; but the great difficulty to him—and he imagined it would be still greater to Mr. Pitt—was the circumstance of that gentleman's continuance in office.'

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This answer might have been regarded as setting the matter at rest; for it was not reasonable to expect that Mr. Pitt should divest himself of his authority, and descend from his vantage ground, to gratify opponents: the meetings, however, were still held at the St. Albans tavern, and many letters passed between the principal parties; but the gentlemen were mortified by finding all their exertions for a personal interview ineffectual: on the second of February, therefore, Mr. Grovesnor, their chairman, moved a resolution in the house, relative to a united administration; and in the debates thence ensuing, Fox charged his opponent not only with 'preferring his own understanding to the collected wisdom of the house; but of making a breach between the legislative and executive branches of the government:' Pitt, in reply, after alluding to the sense of the people, which was in favor of the late ministerial changes, expressed a determination not to give way; 'because he anticipated great evils from such compliance: he was, however, so little attached to office, that if he could see a strong and well-connected government ready to succeed him, he would cheerfully retire, without any wish to form a part of it.' The resolution being carried, Mr. Coke, member for Norfolk, moved—that it is the opinion of this house, that the continuance of the present ministers in office, is an

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obstacle to the formation of such an administration, as may enjoy the confidence of the house, and tend to pacify the country.'

This motion was strenuously resisted by Mr. Dundas, as contrary to the wishes of the people, expressed in their late addresses to the throne, and hostile to the scheme of union, which the previous resolution was intended to promote: Fox replied in a speech of unusual vehemence; and having intimated, at its conclusion, that if ministers persevered in retaining office, it would be necessary to adopt measures for restoring the insulted honor of the house; he called on the country gentlemen to stand aloof from men who had established themselves in power by means so unconstitutional and destructive.

Mr. Powys, after declaring that he had done every thing in his power to prevent the passing of the late resolutions, and that he thought it hard to condemn a minister untried, especially one for whose abilities and conduct he entertained the highest respect; added, that he must vote for the present motion, while the former resolutions remained on the journals: at the same time, he acknowledged the delicacy of Mr. Pitt's situation, and said, 'he did not wish to see him quit the fortress in which he stood at present; and come with servile humility, or with a halter round his neck, to deliver up its keys to the besiegers: he proposed, therefore, as an alternative, that Mr. Pitt should move the previous question, for the purpose of reconsidering or rescinding the former resolutions:' the minister, however, disdained to adopt any such measure for the sake of gaining a vote; and immediately gave his direct negative to the present motion. With regard to the fortress, of which the honorable gentleman had spoken, 'the only one which he knew, or ever desired to have a share in defending, was the fortress of the constitution: for that he would resist every attack, and every attempt to seduce him out of it: with what regard to personal honor or public principle could he be expected to march out, with a halter about his neck, change his armor, and meanly beg to

be readmitted as a volunteer in the enemy's army?' He concluded a spirited and able speech by observing, that if the house insisted on ministers going out, there were two constitutional ways open to it; either by impeaching them for their crimes, if any had been committed; or by an immediate address to the crown: their removal lay with the crown, not with that house; and their continuance in office, for the purpose of preventing government from falling a prey to an administration which had been removed, and now wished to force itself on the sovereign against his will, was neither illegal nor unconstitutional: when the house, however, divided on the question, it was carried by 223 against 204.

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This measure was followed up, on the third, by Mr. Coke, who moved—that the two resolutions carried the preceding evening, should be laid before his majesty by such members of this house as are privy counsellors. In the debates which ensued, Mr. Wilberforce took a principal part; declaring 'that Mr. Fox, by his coalition with lord North, had lost all public confidence, all political reputation, and all popularity.' Mr. Powys observed, that although he should vote for the motion, yet 'he hesitated not to pronounce Mr. Pitt the first political character in this country; but he was not greater than the constitution:' the question was carried by a majority of 211 to 187; and at Fox's motion, the committee on the state of the nation was postponed to Monday, in order to give time for knowing what effect this communication to his majesty would produce. The house then adjourned to Thursday, the fifth of February; on which day lord Hinchinbrook stated, that he had laid their resolutions before the king, who had signified his intention of taking them into consideration.

No communication on the subject was made from his majesty before the eighteenth: in the mean time, members were occupied in canvassing the proceedings of the lords, and in measures of revenue and finance: on one of these occasions, when the subject of a coalition was brought up, Pitt observed, that 'with regard

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to animosity, he entertained none against any man; but there might be persons, whose private character he respected, and whose abilities were eminent; with whom he could not, on public grounds, bring himself to act, or to sit in the same cabinet.' As this observation plainly pointed to lord North, that nobleman though evidently hurt by such an exclusion, declared, in a dignified and manly manner, 'that although averse from yielding to the prejudices or caprice of any individual, he would not be an obstacle to the formation of such a firm, extended, and united administration, as the distracted state of the nation required; he would do that for his country, which he was not disposed to do for the minister.' Several members returned thanks to him for this instance of public spirit the house then resolved itself into a committee of supply; and after a long conversation on the expediency of building fortifications for our dock-yards, the ordnance estimates were voted without a division next day lord John Cavendish moved, that the house resolve itself into a committee on the receipt tax act when the minister voted in a majority, and thereby declared his approbation of the principle of the bill.

Popularity
of Mr.
Pitt.

In the mean time, the sentiments of the nation were rapidly verging toward that point where Pitt foresaw they would settle; for on the tenth of February, the corporation of London sent to him, not only a vote of thanks 'for his able, upright, and disinterested conduct in the present alarming and critical juncture of affairs,' but the freedom of their city, in a gold box, 'as a mark of gratitude for his zeal in supporting the legal prerogatives of the crown and constitutional rights of the people.' When the commons met on the eighteenth, the premier rose, not to deliver a regular message from the king, but merely to inform the house that his majesty, after a full consideration of its resolutions communicated to him, had not thought proper to dismiss his ministers; nor had those ministers resigned: Fox immediately expressed astonishment at this explicit declaration, and declared that the commons had never before received such an answer from a prince of the

Brunswick line—a flat and peremptory negative to their sentiments and wishes: he alluded in marked terms to the times of Charles I., in which, as in the present contest, the house of commons was at variance with the other branches of the legislature; but he forgot, or did not choose to state, that, in the instance alluded to, the house was backed by the *people*, while the honesty and sincerity of that monarch were more than questioned: in the present instance, his majesty had taken high constitutional grounds; had acted a sincere and manly part throughout: the people suspected neither his honor nor his sincerity; and a large majority of them, which was daily increasing, coincided heartily with his views. Fox, being convinced that the resolutions of the house made no impression either on the king or Mr. Pitt, now resolved to ascertain whether the majority, which he had hitherto commanded, would support him in more violent measures. The ordnance estimates would afford him a fair opportunity of stopping the supplies, but he was aware that this was a delicate point: accordingly, he observed, that he had not determined whether it would be right to proceed so far; but was desirous that the house, in its unprecedented situation, should have time to reflect on what they had just heard from his majesty's minister: all he positively affirmed was, that something must be done: leaving it therefore open to himself to act as he might see expedient, he had recourse to the plausible proposal of adjourning to the next day; by which means he would form some judgment of the temper and disposition of the house. In one part of his artful and ingenious speech, he endeavored to excite alarm; in another, he leaned to conciliation; in a third, he threatened: he also declared, that there was a settled design to annihilate the importance of the house of commons, in order to persuade members that they were contributing to their own degradation; but as Mr. Pitt's character and principles exempted him from any such imputation, he ascribed this design solely to an interior cabinet, and to secret advisers, of whom he was the unconscious

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tool.⁶ He declared his own anxiety for pacific measures, and asserted his love of moderation: he even acknowledged the king's right to nominate his own ministers, and to continue them in office; though such a concession could scarcely be reconciled with his former assertions.

Mr. Powys followed in support of the motion, which he represented as temperate, and the only means of giving breathing time, in the prospect of a compromise: he adhered to his opinion, that the house must support its own resolutions; and still professed his admiration of Pitt's principles and abilities; against whom he intended no personal opposition, though he supported the present motion.

The minister, in reply, observed; that an attempt had been made to color the measure of postponing the supplies, as if it were only the pause of a moment; and as if this pause were occasioned by a circumstance which the house had not foreseen, and which placed parliament, the country, and public affairs in a new situation: but to all intents and purposes the supplies were stopped; and the trick was too shallow to succeed against the good sense of the country: no man would doubt that he allowed the right of the commons to withhold supplies; but he hoped no man would say that the present crisis demanded such a measure. 'The right honorable gentleman,' said he, 'conscious that he is actually stopping the supplies, is very prudently unwilling to push the question; for then only can the conduct of his majesty's ministers be fully investigated: I therefore will press the question, and will challenge my opponents to meet it fairly and without subterfuge; for in that discussion, the different motives of contending parties will appear: and I know, from the temper and principles of this house, that facts will be substantiated, and truths established, which will make it reluctant to withhold supplies, on which the harmony and energy of government depend, and for which the national faith is pledged:' he then went on to combat arguments which had been ad-

⁶ Tomline, vol. i. p. 370.

dressed personally against himself, and the debate was continued to a late hour, when the question of adjournment was carried by a majority of only twelve.

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'The friends of Pitt,' says his biographer,⁷ 'congratulated each other on this small majority, which afforded to many, who had hitherto desponded, a ray of hope that he would ultimately triumph.' A compromise was desired by some; and even Mr. Fox said, he thought that the supplies ought not to be withheld; only, that they ought not to be voted unconditionally: the minister, however, declared that he would enter into no compromise, or stipulation for passing them: the conversation continued for some time; but at last Fox proposed, that the committee on the state of the nation should be deferred till Monday; and soon afterwards the house adjourned.

Next day, Mr. Powys moved a resolution, humbly requesting his majesty 'to take such measures as might tend to give effect to the wishes of his faithful commons;' but as this did not appear sufficiently strong, an amendment was moved, to insert the following words; 'by removing any obstacle to the formation of such an administration as this house has declared requisite in the present critical situation of affairs.' It being generally admitted that the dismissal of ministers was aimed at, a long debate ensued; when Pitt, in one of the most spirited and forcible speeches ever heard in the house of commons, replied to all the arguments and invectives of Fox, as well as of those who followed in his train. After showing that the present opposition tended to re-establish the former coalition, which was pregnant with calamity to the nation, he attacked his great opponent on the assumption of a new character, as champion of a majority of that house against the voice of the nation; taunting him with expressions which he had lately used regarding the opinions and addresses of the people; as if the former were grounded on imposture or ignorance, and the latter were on a parallel with those offered in the infamous reign of Charles II. From a grave exposure

⁷ Tomline, vol. i. p. 376.

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of the hypocritical conduct of opposition, he passed to a burlesque account of their discomfiture; for they denied that the addresses had sufficiently marked public opinion, and talked of their battles at Reading, at Hackney, and at Westminster; where, however, the addresses were all carried. 'Whether it be a proof of victory,' said he, turning to Mr. Fox, 'to say, the people would not even hear me; whether that right honorable gentleman, who once could charm the multitude into dumb admiration of his eloquence, and into silent gratitude for his exertions in the cause of freedom; whether he, emphatically named 'the man of the people,' be now content with the execration of multitudes, who once, perhaps, too much adored him—these are points I will not decide.'

In allusion to Fox's boast of splendid names and connexions in his favor, the orator declared that he was not afraid to match the minority against them, on the score of independence, of property, of hereditary honors, of knowledge in the law and constitution, of all that can give dignity to the peerage: then, looking at Mr. Pratt, who was one of the members of the house he burst out into a fine encomium on the eminent character of his father, lord Camden; whom he did not fear to place in the front of that battle, for which the noble peer had buckled on his armor; marching forth, as if inspired with youthful vigor, to the charge. 'Venerable he is,' said Mr. Pitt, 'for his years, venerable for his abilities, adored throughout the country on account of his attachment to this glorious constitution; high in rank and honor, and possessing in these tumultuous times an equanimity and dignity of mind, that render him far superior to that wretched party spirit with which the world may fancy us infected. While the house was admiring this transition from the language of keen rebuke and scorn to that of high and eloquent praise, he burst out into an indignant refusal of those terms, which had been so often proposed to him as preliminary to a coalition. After stating the position in which he stood, he said; 'I will not abandon it, to throw myself on the mercy of that right

honorable gentleman, who calls me a mere nominal minister, the puppet of secret influence. Sir, it is because I will not become a nominal minister of his creation,—it is because I disdain to be a puppet of the right honorable gentleman,—that I will not resign: that I am now standing on the rotten ground of secret influence, I will not allow; nor yet will I quit this ground, to put myself, as he calls it, under his protection; to accept of my nomination at his hands; and become a poor, self-condemned, helpless, unprofitable minister in his train. If I have, indeed, submitted to be the puppet and minion of the crown, why should he condescend to receive me into his band? Admit, that I have more than my share of the king's confidence; yet how is my exclusion from office two days to make any diminution of that confidence? The right honorable gentleman, therefore, every moment contradicts his own principles; and he knows, that if I were first to resign, in the forlorn hope of returning as an efficient minister into administration, I should soon become the sport and ridicule of my opponents; nay, forfeit also the good opinion of those, by whose independent support I am now honored.'

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After this forcible and indignant exposition of his feelings, Pitt attacked his antagonist on the menace, to which he had given utterance, of stopping the supplies. Conscious of the tremendous evils to which such a measure would lead, Fox had confined himself to that menace; and public indignation made him anxious to clear himself from the suspicion of sincerity; but he was in the power of one who determined not to spare him. 'The right honorable gentleman,' said Mr. Pitt, 'tells you that he means not to stop the supplies again to-night, but that he shall only postpone them occasionally: he has stopped them once, because the king did not listen to the voice of his commons; he now ceases to stop them, though the same cause ceases not to exist. Now what is all this but a mere bravado, calculated to alarm the country, yet ineffectual for the object? I grant, indeed, that if the money destined to pay our public creditors be voted, a great part of the

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mischief is avoided: but let not this house think it a small thing to stop money for public services.' After alluding to the evil of such prodigious sums flowing into the national coffers, and remaining there without circulation; and also to the impropriety of parliament trusting those persons with public money in whom it placed no confidence, he asked—'What, sir, is there in my character so flagitious? Am I, chief minister of the treasury, so suspected of alienating public money to my own, or to any other sinister purpose, that I am not to be trusted with the ordinary issues?' (A cry of No, no, from the opposition benches.) 'Well then,' he exclaimed, seizing on this admission, 'if they renounce the imputation, let them also renounce the argument.'

With regard to the very important subject of royal prerogative, he thus expressed himself, in clear and constitutional terms:—'I will not shrink from avowing myself a friend to the king's just prerogative. Prerogative, sir, has been properly called a part of the people's rights: grant only, that this house has a negative in the appointment of ministers, and you transfer to it the executive: if the constitutional independence of the crown be thus reduced to the verge of annihilation, where is the boasted equipoise of the constitution? where is the balance among the three branches of the legislature, which our ancestors measured out to each with so much precision?' After stating, that it was neither contempt for the house, nor lust of power, nor a personal point of honor, which made him cling to office; but that the situation of the country called loudly on him to defend his position as if it were a castle, he concluded with these emphatic words;—'I am determined, therefore; and I will defend it.'

But no appeal to reason or feeling could yet break down the obstinacy of the commons: the motion, as amended by Mr. Eden, passed by a majority of twenty; while Fox, pursuing his triumph, moved and carried an address, to be solemnly presented to the king by the whole house, praying him to dismiss his

ministers: the report of the ordnance estimates was then brought up; which being agreed to without debate, an adjournment took place between five and six in the morning.

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The committee at the St. Albans tavern continued to hold its meetings, and to pass votes; but Mr. Pitt still refused to resign, and the duke of Portland would not treat with him in his ministerial capacity: this gave occasion to an old member of the house to say, that the diplomacy of his grace reminded him of the fox in the fable, entreating the raven, who was seated on the branch of a tree, to come down, and settle their terms of alliance upon the ground. On the ninth of February, the associates determined to assemble once a week only during the sitting of parliament: but what passed in the house on the eleventh of this month revived their hopes; and at a meeting on the thirteenth, they renewed their representations both to Pitt and Fox, on the advantage of 'a union consistent with principle and honor;' adding thanks to lord North, for his voluntary declaration of a desire to promote it.

In consequence of this proceeding, and that no backwardness on the subject might be imputed to himself, the minister made a proposal to the king, that his majesty himself should recommend an interview between the duke of Portland and Mr. Pitt, for the purpose of forming a united ministry: it was received by the sovereign with surprise and agitation; but he sent a reply next morning, expressing great mortification at the possibility of seeing the heads of opposition again in office, especially Mr. Fox, whose conduct had been directed not more against his royal station than his person: his sentiments were thus recorded:

Firmness
of the king.

'My present situation is perhaps the most singular that ever occurred in the annals of this or any other country; for the house of lords, by a majority of not less than near two to one, have declared in my favor; and my subjects at large, in a much more considerable proportion, are not less decided: to combat which,

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the opposition have only a majority of twenty, or at most of thirty, in the house of commons, who, I am sorry to add, seem as yet willing to prevent the public supplies. Though I certainly have never much valued popularity, yet I do not think it is to be despised, when arising from a rectitude of conduct, and when it is to be retained by following the same respectable path, which conviction makes me esteem that of duty; as calculated to prevent one branch of the legislature from annihilating the other two, and seizing also the executive power, to which it has no claim.

‘I confess I have not yet seen the smallest appearance of sincerity in the leaders of opposition, to come into the only mode by which I could tolerate them in my service—their giving up the idea of having the administration in their hands; and coming in as a respectable part of one on a broad basis: therefore I, with a jealous eye, look on any words dropped by them, either in parliament, or to the gentlemen of the St. Albans tavern, as meant only to gain those gentlemen; or, if carrying farther views, to draw Mr. Pitt by negotiation into some difficulty.’

After authorizing the interview, his majesty proposed to send lord Sidney to the duke of Portland with a message drawn out on paper; adding, at the same time—‘should his grace refuse to meet Mr. Pitt, especially on the strange plea which he has hitherto held out, I shall not deem it right ever to address myself to him again.’

The king’s message was delivered the same day to the duke, signifying ‘his majesty’s earnest desire that he should have a personal conference with Mr. Pitt, for the purpose of forming a new administration on a wide basis, as well as on fair and equal terms.’ Opposition affected to consider this message as a virtual resignation of ministers, or as an abandonment of them by the sovereign: but another difficulty was started by the duke of Portland, who haughtily demanded, what was meant by the word ‘equal,’ in the message? he did not object to the word ‘fair,’ which was a general term; but ‘equal’ was more specific and

limited. Mr. Pitt's answer naturally was, that the meaning of the word might be determined in a personal conference: but the other persisted in demanding a previous explanation; and as the minister was not a man to be brow-beaten into preliminary submission, the treaty was broken off *in limine*; when the St. Albans meeting passed its final resolution, which was unnoticed by either party, 'that as the interview was prevented by a doubt respecting a single word, it would be no dishonorable step in either of the gentlemen to give way for the public welfare.'

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On the twenty-fifth of February, the house presented to the king its address, which had been voted on the twentieth; but his majesty still exhibited the firmness which he had hitherto displayed: he answered, by stating that he had heard no valid charge against the ministers of his appointment; that all proposals for a coalition had been rendered abortive though seconded by himself; and he could not discover that any public interest was likely to be promoted by a dismissal of his cabinet. 'Under these circumstances,' concluded his majesty, 'I trust my faithful commons will not wish that the essential offices of executive government should be vacated, until I see a prospect, that such a plan of union as I have called for, and they have pointed out, may be carried into effect.'

Violent
measures
of the
commons.

The efforts of opposition grew more violent as they became more hopeless: when the house met on the twenty-seventh to hear the king's answer, a motion was made for an adjournment, which would necessarily postpone the navy estimates: Pitt resisted this hazardous measure; and so clearly stated the evils which might arise from leaving the fleet to chance, that it was carried only by the small majority of seven: this so alarmed the party, that they made no attempt afterwards to obstruct the supplies. Fox evidently suspected from the first, that he should not be supported by the independent members in that measure; which will account for his wavering inconsistent conduct

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regarding it: he now saw that his suspicions had been well founded.

On the day after this debate, the freedom of the city, already voted to Mr. Pitt, was presented to him in great state, at the house of Lord Chatham in Berkley-square; whence the committee conducted him, in the midst of general acclamations, to a grand dinner at Grocers' hall. On his arrival, and taking the oath, Mr. Wilkes, then chamberlain of the city, addressed him in a speech of great length; and after lavishing very appropriate praise on the youthful minister, thus alluded to the parliamentary contest going on:—'I know, sir, how high you stand in the confidence of the public: much is to be done; but you have youth, capacity, and firmness: it is the characteristic of a true patriot, never to despair. Your noble father, sir, annihilated party; and I hope you will, in the end, bear down and conquer the hydra of faction, which now rears its hundred heads against you. I remember his saying, that for the good of the people, he dared to look the proudest connexions of this country in the face: I trust that the same spirit animates his son; and, as he has the same support of the crown and of the people, I am firmly persuaded that the same success will follow.'

Fox, however, did not even yet resign the contest, though he did not think proper to run the hazard of stopping the supplies: he now proposed and carried another address to the king, in less general terms, directly asserting a right in the commons to advise his majesty on the exercise of his prerogative; and by virtue of that right, specifically requesting him to dismiss his ministers. In the ensuing debate, Pitt ably vindicated himself from having manifested any undue predilection in favor of the monarchical part of the government, and any wish to destroy, or encroach on, the privileges of parliament: the address was presented on the fourth of March. When the king's answer was read, repeating the same sentiments which he had constantly expressed on the subject, Fox attempted, by

motions for adjournment, to impede parliamentary business; and considering it essential to his interests that members should not be sent back to their constituents in the present change of public sentiment, he endeavored to prevent a dissolution of parliament by a short mutiny bill, to be passed from month to month. Against the dangerous consequences of this measure Pitt argued in vain; and he was defeated on a motion for adjournment, which involved it, by 171 to 162: so small a majority, however, caused this measure, like that of stopping the supplies, to be abandoned; nor could the contest be any longer protracted, against the undaunted firmness of the king, the unrivalled talent of the minister, and the increasing admiration of the people: Fox, however, determined to leave on the journals of the house a record of his long and singular resistance to the regal prerogative as well as the national will, and to lodge with his majesty this summary of the principles he had maintained, and the objects he had pursued. A rumor having gone abroad that very important proceedings were to take place on the eighth of March, the gallery was crowded at an early hour; but no full and satisfactory report of them has been preserved, owing to the miserable and arbitrary conduct of sir James Lowther, called by Junius 'the petty tyrant of the north;' who moved a standing order of the house, that no strangers should be received, unless introduced by members.⁸ Mr. Fox spoke with his usual ability, and more than usual violence. After accusing his antagonist of insolent and unconstitutional conduct; declaring that a union of parties was now impossible; and lamenting the disgrace and ruin brought on the country by the issue of this struggle;—he moved, as his last measure, 'a humble representation to the king,' expressing at great length the surprise and affliction of the house at receiving the answer to its address, which his ministers had advised him to

* He had arrived late with a friend whom he wished to introduce: and finding no seat vacant, made this ill-natured motion. Many members remonstrated; but in vain: he insisted on exercising his right, and the whole gallery was left in possession of his friend; while the reporters shared the fate of those that were excluded.

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return. This document, however it may be admired as a composition, contains so many contradictory principles, that it has been cited as evidence against its author's capacity for the ministerial office: it was accepted, after a long debate, by a majority of one vote; which was acknowledged as a defeat.

The minister sent an account of these proceedings to his majesty, and received the following prompt reply:—'Mr. Pitt's letter is, undoubtedly, the most satisfactory I have received for many months. An avowal, in the outset, that the proposition held forth is not intended to go farther lengths than a kind of manifesto, and then carrying it by a majority of only one; and the day concluded with an avowal that all negotiation is at an end—give me every reason to hope, that, by a firm and proper conduct, this faction will, by degrees, be deserted by many, and at length be forgotten. I shall ever with pleasure consider, that by the prudence as well as rectitude of one person in the house of commons, this great change has been effected; and that he will ever be able to reflect with satisfaction, that in having supported me, he has saved the constitution, the most perfect of human formation.'

On the following day, the house went into committee on the mutiny bill, which was carried for its usual duration of one year; and Pitt's triumph was complete. 'The house,' observed Mr. Powys, 'was conquered; for though a vote of the commons could once bestow a crown, it could not now procure the dismissal of a minister.' In the instance, however, to which he alluded, he forgot that the people were joined with the house: in the present case, they were with Mr. Pitt; who prevailed against the coalition by their aid, as Mr. Fox had prevailed against lord North's ministry; and thus, in the course of two years, we have two instances of the indirect, but unfailing power which the people at large possess over the house of commons. The nation had not looked on this memorable struggle with indifference from the beginning: its feelings had gradually become stronger and warmer in favor of the undaunted monarch; and its enthusiasm now burst

forth to swell his triumph. Almost every city and corporation, not under the influence of opposition, presented addresses to the throne, thanking his majesty for dismissing his late administration, and declaring their resolution to support him in defence of the lawful rights of his crown: the minister also received numerous addresses, containing decided approbation of his conduct, and urging him to persevere in maintaining the true principles of our constitution. Pitt's victory was indeed complete: he had fought for a noble prize—the highest place among European statesmen; and he had won it against the great leader of opposition in his full prowess, backed by a crowd of daring and devoted adherents, historical names, comprehending as large a portion of rank, opulence, and intelligence, as this country ever exhibited. He had won it, not more by his uncommon talents and intrepidity, than by his unshaken integrity and disinterested patriotism; qualities which strongly recommended him both to the king and to the people. At all times these high qualities were acknowledged and commended in Mr. Pitt, both by his adherents and his antagonists; and whatever may have been said of his haughtiness or austerity of manners; his most desperate opponents, in the bitterest moments of defeat, extolled those virtues which often rendered their own efforts impotent and fruitless.

The time was now at hand for that appeal to the nation on which the minister had determined from the first; though he would no more be driven to it by the acts, than deterred from it by the menaces of his opponents. The house continued to meet every day, and the usual motions relative to supplies were suffered to pass without any impediment; nor was any farther remark made on the mutiny bill in its remaining stages: Fox and his party hoped that by acquiescing in the measures of government, they might induce Pitt not to dissolve parliament; or that the country might consider its dissolution, after all opposition was withdrawn, a needless and improper exercise of the pre-

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rogative:⁹ but he was not to be diverted from his purpose; being aware, that if the present parliament continued, his adversaries, though now passive, might come forward with renewed vigor on some future occasion; and the present disposition of the public mind was too much in his favor to neglect such an opportunity of strengthening his cause.

On the twelfth of March, the minister voted in a minority, on a motion of alderman Sawbridge, to inquire into the present state of the representation; after which, nothing important occurred till the twenty-second, when the secretary at war moved the order of the day for a committee on the army estimates: sir Grey Cooper then mentioned the general report of a dissolution, which he said would be daring and unwarrantable under present circumstances; for though the army had been voted, it could not be legally paid until an appropriation act should have passed. The following day, when the report of the committee of supply came on, Pitt was eagerly questioned on the subject by lord North, general Conway, and others; but having made up his own mind, he remained contemptuously silent: no answer could be obtained; and the report was admitted. On the twenty-fourth, the king went down to the house of lords; and, after giving the royal assent to several bills, delivered a decisive speech from the throne, in which he observed, that he felt it a duty which he owed to the constitution and the country, to recur as speedily as possible to his people, by calling a new parliament: he trusted that this measure would tend to obviate mischiefs arising from the late unhappy divisions and distractions, and allow various important objects, requiring deliberation, to proceed with less interruption and happier effect.

Dissolu-
tion of
parliament.

Next day the dissolution took place; and a new parliament was summoned to meet on the eighteenth of May. In the general election, Mr. Pitt was put into nomination for London, and importuned to stand

⁹ Tomline, vol. i. p. 442.

for many other places, among which was the city of Bath, which his father had represented: but having in the first instance offered himself for the university of Cambridge, he and his friend lord Euston prevailed there, against Mr. John Townshend and Mr. Mansfield, both of whom had opposed him in the late parliamentary struggle, and were now supported by all the interest and exertions of opposition. In most counties, where the electors were independent, a pledge to support Mr. Pitt was sufficient to ensure success against any candidate of different principles; hence the result was, that 160 of the old members of opposition lost their seats; and, in addition to their disappointment, obtained the ludicrous appellation of 'Fox's martyrs.' Thus ended the greatest crisis of Pitt's political life: his star was now in the ascendant, while that of his rival set in gloom; and a new era commenced in the annals of our constitution; for by the steady courage and perseverance of the son of Chatham, the power of that aristocratic confederacy, whose bonds had been already loosened, was completely overthrown; by its convulsive struggles the character of parliament itself was in some degree altered; for the king ceased to be in a state of pupilage, and the people acquired importance: accordingly, the whigs, who in their palmy days had strenuously supported the royal authority, now found an advantage in conciliating the people by advocating the most liberal principles: they had been an oligarchy of leading families, maintained and assisted by the influence of the crown, placed at their disposal; they now became a party in opposition, composed still of many leading families, but mainly supported by the genius and eloquence of distinguished orators, who began to appeal boldly to abstract rights, and to canvass with great freedom those conventional laws which regulate society.

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The prospect which lay before Mr. Pitt would have been appalling to a man of less talent, nerve, and integrity. He had to provide a government for our Indian empire; to restore trade; to make arrangements for paying the public debt; to regulate and augment

Triumph of
Mr. Pitt.

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the revenue ; and to repair many other national interests nearly ruined by the American war : he had to contend in parliament against a powerful phalanx, with which the influence of the heir apparent to the throne was united ; and it was necessary for him, considering the ground on which he stood, to pay assiduous court both to the king and to the people. During the first period of his administration, from his grand victory over Fox to the French revolution, he had this arduous part to play, and he played it well : after that event, the imprudence of opposition, who were enraptured with the proceedings of revolutionary France, gave him an accession of strength which fixed him still more firmly in his seat. ‘ His whole history,’ says a popular writer, with equal force and truth, ‘ substantiates in the clearest manner two principles of the highest importance to British statesmen of every period ; that the nation eminently honors political manliness ; and that no rank or ability, destitute of moral worth, can possess a permanent ascendancy over the general mind.’

CHAPTER XXVIII.

GEORGE III. (CONTINUED.)—1784.

Meeting of a new parliament—Conduct of the high-bailiff of Westminster canvassed—Acts to prevent smuggling—Budget of 1784—Bill for the regulation of the East India company introduced by Mr. Pitt—Carried—Bill passed for the restoration of forfeited estates in Scotland—Great popularity of Mr. Pitt—Domestic events—Prince of Wales at Brighton—Attempt of the emperor Joseph to open the navigation of the Scheldt—Opening of parliament—The minister left in a minority—Mr. Pitt introduces a new measure of parliamentary reform—Is defeated—Financial improvements adopted by the minister—Budget of 1785—Affairs of Ireland—Resolutions for adjusting the commercial intercourse between the two kingdoms passed in both houses—But not sanctioned by the Irish legislature—Mortification of Mr. Pitt on this occasion—Popular meetings in Ireland, and prosecutions by government—Affairs on the continent.

WHEN parliament assembled on the eighteenth of May, and a motion was made for the appointment of a speaker, Mr. Fox took occasion to complain that the representation of the people was incomplete, owing to the want of two persons to serve for Westminster. Fox himself had a majority on the poll over sir Cecil Wray; but the high-bailiff, by an unwarrantable partiality, refused to make a return in his favor;¹ for which an action was afterwards brought in the court of king's bench, and a verdict with considerable damages obtained. After the division that took place on the address, in which ministers had a large majority, this subject was resumed by Mr. Lee, late attorney-general, who moved a resolution 'that the

¹ Mr. Fox had in the mean time secured a seat for the borough of Kirkwall, in Orkney; by which he exposed himself to the scoffs of his opponent, as a person banished to the 'Ultima Thule.'

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high-bailiff of Westminster, on the day when the writ of election expired, ought to have returned two members to serve in parliament for that city.' A violent debate ensued; and the previous question having been moved by sir Lloyd Kenyon, it was ordered that the returning officer should attend the house on the following day. The sole pretext on which he rested his defence, was, that having reason to suspect the validity of many votes, taken during a poll which lasted six weeks, he had granted a scrutiny before the termination of which, he could not in conscience make a return:² but to this an answer presented itself; that the scrutiny is nothing more than a revision of the poll by the returning officer; and if such revision cannot be completed before the period at which the writ is returnable, he is bound by his office and oath to make the return agreeably to the poll, as actually taken: otherwise, elections would be thrown into the hands of the returning officer, who might prevent, for an indefinite term, the admission into parliament of any person obnoxious to the administration. After pleadings at the bar by counsel, the motion was renewed, 'that the high-bailiff be directed to make the return forthwith;' but this was resisted by the minister and his supporters, with whom, on this occasion, the principle of party spirit, and perhaps of revenge, prevailed over a sense of justice; so that a division, it was negatived by 195 to 117: a motion was then made and carried, for the high-bailiff to proceed in the scrutiny with all practicable despatch. On the sixteenth of June Mr. alderman Sawbridge moved for the appointment of a committee, 'to inquire into the present state of the representation of the commons in parliament;' but as this motion seemed both calculated and designed to embarrass the new premier, rather than to promote the object proposed, Mr. Pitt truly stated that the time was improper; at the same time observing, that the measure had his approbation, and that he would

² He admitted, when questioned at the bar of the house, that this scrutiny might last two years.

himself bring it before the house early next session: accordingly, the previous question was carried by a majority of seventy-four. CHAP.
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Two subjects, at this period, demanded his immediate attention; the revenue of the country, and the state of the East India company: in the case of the former, it appeared that there was a deficiency of £3,000,000 a year, which was principally owing to a failure in the estimated produce of taxes imposed by lord North during the American war: there also existed an enormous floating debt, which was to be funded, and the interest provided for; so that the deficiency could scarcely be reckoned at less than £2,000,000, without any allowance for a sinking fund: in addition to this, the three per cents. were rather lower than fifty-seven, although peace had been firmly established for more than a year. Under such melancholy circumstances, it was a matter of urgent necessity to improve the income of the country, and to raise public credit, not only by imposing new taxes, but by rendering those that existed more productive. Acts to
prevent
smuggling.

Mr. Pitt was convinced that nothing would tend more to promote the latter of these objects, than the suppression of smuggling, which was at this time carried on to an almost incredible extent; for it was calculated that 40,000 persons were thus engaged, who set all law and authority at defiance: in the prosecution, therefore, of so excellent a plan, he thought it expedient first to introduce a bill to prevent smuggling in general; and next to propose regulations applicable to those articles which formed its principal support.

By the provisions of his general bill, the right of seizing certain vessels with their cargoes, under peculiar circumstances, was greatly extended; the building of such vessels was prohibited; armed ships were obliged to procure licenses; the rules respecting clearance were enlarged; and the act of shooting at his majesty's ships and officers, or at persons assisting them in the execution of their duty, was made a capital felony. The principle of this bill was approved

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by both houses, and it passed without a division: in aid of it, he brought forward two others; the one directed against contraband trade in tea, and the other against that in spirits. Tea was considered a staple commodity of the smuggler; more than 7,000,000 pounds of that article being thus introduced into the country every year, while about 5,500,000 only were sold by the East India company; so that tea-companies were formed on the continent, for the purpose of supplying our smugglers; and the very servants of our own company remitted to Europe their acquired wealth, by means of tea sent in foreign vessels, consigned to foreign companies, and thus introduced into England.

To remove the strong temptation existing to purchase this tea, it was necessary to enable the fair trader to compete with the contrabandist; which could only be done by reducing the duties, so as to leave them no more than equal to the expense of smuggling: Pitt's plan, therefore, was to repeal all the present duties on tea, and subject different sorts to one of twelve and a half per cent., according to their respective prices: this reduced duty was calculated to produce about £170,000 per annum; which would occasion a loss to the revenue of between £500,000 and £600,000: to compensate therefore for such defalcation, he proposed to increase the tax on windows; and so to arrange it, that by this commutation, every individual, who now bought tea legally imported, would be a gainer,³ as well as the public revenue: all houses, which did not pay to church and poor, were to be wholly exempted; so that the lower classes would receive an unmixed benefit: the new tax on windows, and the duty intended to be retained on tea, would together produce £900,000; so that to the revenue would accrue an annual profit of near £200,000; without considering the increase that might be expected in the consumption of tea: hence great benefit

³ For instance, the master of a house, with nine windows, which would pay 10s. 6d., might be supposed to consume annually seven pounds of tea: the difference of the old and new duties on this would be £1. 5s. 10d.; consequently such person would save 15s. 4d. by the commutation.

would arise to the East India company, which would be enabled to employ additional ships and seamen; while the whole profit of the trade would be confined to this country and to fair dealers. A vigorous but unavailing opposition was made by Fox to this measure; which passed the lower house by a large majority, and the upper with only one short debate.

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The same observation which was made respecting high duties on tea, was applicable to those on spirits; since great frauds were committed on the distilleries at home: Mr. Pitt therefore brought forward a bill, by which the duties payable on British spirits were regulated and enforced, while those on foreign spirits were considerably reduced: as this was considered an experiment, under the expectation that increased consumption would fully compensate for the reduction of duty, no substitute was proposed; but the act was to continue in force only two years. These bills were received with general approbation, and fully answered the purpose for which they were intended; offending only those who were interested in the continuance of an illicit traffic.

On the thirtieth of June, the premier introduced what is called the budget, which included the subject of taxation;—an irksome duty; but he had the comfort of reflecting, that the necessities which demanded it were not of his creation: the topics discussed in his speech, were the services of the present year; the ways and means for defraying the expenses of those services; the loan; the funding a part of the unfunded debt; and new taxes.

For the current services of the year, beside the ordinary sources of income, a loan of six millions was found requisite; and this, which had been so often made a source of patronage and gain to the friends of government, was now laid open to public competition: the biddings were sent in, sealed up; and, being opened in the presence of the governor and deputy-governor of the Bank, Mr. Pitt accepted the lowest, without reserving to himself the disposal of a single shilling. The navy and victualling bills, with the ordnance de-

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bentures, which formed a considerable part of the unfunded debt, amounted at present to near £14,000,000: the minister was desirous of funding this sum; but, at the suggestions of the monied men, he gave way, and invested only £6,600,000; for, if the larger quantity of stock had come at once into the market, it might have depressed prices, and caused the bargains, both for the loan and for the unfunded debt, to have been made on worse terms. As he wisely thought that in every financial operation redemption at a future time ought to be kept in view, he determined in this instance to try the experiment of a five per cent. fund: he wished also to make the loan in the same; but the money-lenders had a great aversion to a high fund; since they were persuaded, from the circumstance of its being more easily redeemed, that it would never bear a price proportionate to the lower funds: according to existing prices of stock, a five per cent. fund ought to have been at ninety-five; but, in his calculation, Mr. Pitt took it only at ninety-three; so that the public paid about 2s. per cent. interest more than would have been paid on a three per cent. fund, for the probability of making the redemption hereafter on better terms: as a farther inducement to the holders of bills and debentures to subscribe to this new fund, he made it irredeemable, and the interest irreducible for thirty years, or till £25,000,000 of the existing funds should be extinguished. There still remained in the market £7,000,000 in bills and debentures, which bore an interest at four per cent., amounting to £280,000, while that of the new fund required an interest of rather more than £315,000; this, added to the interest of the new loan, created a charge to the country of £910,000 per annum; and Mr. Pitt undertook to find taxes, exhausted as the country was, which should produce that sum. Those proposed were on hats, ribands, gauzes, coals, horses, linens and calicoes, candles, licenses to dealers in excisable articles, bricks and tiles, paper, certificates to kill game, and hackney coaches. 'It would be idle,' he said, 'to suppose that all the taxes in this long catalogue were unexception-

able; but the necessities of the public did not leave it in his option to deal otherwise than openly and fairly: the wants of government were many; the finances of the country had been much reduced; and it was proper to look our real situation manfully in the face:’ under this impression, he produced his list, to which he invited the deliberation and assistance of the committee; he had disguised nothing from the public which affected their real interest; and however great might be the risk of incurring popular odium, he had not shrunk from a painful act of duty.

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The readiness and perspicuity with which the chancellor of the exchequer went through this mass of financial detail and dry calculation, his extensive and minute information on every point which he discussed, the manly spirit with which he met the difficulties of the country, and the exertions he made to improve our revenue and public credit, gained for him the applause even of his political opponents: with regard to his management of the unfunded debt, Fox declared that ‘too much praise could not be given him.’ The only tax which met with decided disapprobation was that on coals, as oppressive to the poor, and injurious to our manufactures; on which account the minister was induced to abandon it: he also relinquished his intention of including hops in excisable articles, for which a license was to be required: in the room of these he substituted taxes on gold and silver plate, lead exported, race-horses, licenses to sell ale, and postage of letters: he also introduced regulations regarding the privilege of franking, calculated to increase the revenue of the post-office. Mr. Pitt had now reached the summit of popularity, and the public anxiously expected his plan for the government of India. Having by two preliminary measures extricated the company from its difficulties, and restored its sinking credit, he introduced, on the sixth of July, a bill founded on the general principles of that rejected by the former parliament, and to which the company had now given their slow and reluctant consent. This bill may be considered under three separate heads;—a new establishment at home, with powers extending

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over the general concerns of the company; regulations to be introduced in India; and the erection of a court in England, for the trial of offences committed in the East. Under the first head, a board of control was to be formed of a certain number of commissioners; six to be of the rank of privy counsellors, comprising the chancellor of the exchequer and one secretary of state; and four others holding offices of such emolument under government as precluded the necessity of a salary: the members of this board, to be appointed by the king, and removable at his pleasure, were authorised to check, superintend, and control the civil and military government as well as revenue of the company: despatches transmitted by the court of directors to the presidencies, were to be subjected to their inspection, and also countersigned by them: the directors were enjoined to pay due obedience to the orders of this board, respecting civil and military government and revenues; but in case such orders should at any time, in the opinion of their board, relate to matters not connected with these points, they were allowed to appeal to his majesty in council, whose decision was declared final. With regard to the regulations applicable to India, it was proposed, that the government in each of the three stations should consist of a president and three counsellors; that the president of Bengal should be governor-general of India, the commander in chief being one of the council, and next in rank to the governor-general; also, that the commanders in chief at Madras and Bombay should take similar rank at each of those stations. The supreme government of Bengal was to have an effectual control over the other presidencies: the appointment of governors, commanders in chief, and other members of council was to be vested in the directors; but either the king, or the court of directors, might recall the governor-general, or any other person employed by the company. All promotions, civil and military, below the degree of counsellor, were to be made according to seniority, and in a regular progressive succession, unless for some urgent case, to be transmitted to the *directors*: each government was empowered to appre-

hend persons suspected of carrying on illicit correspondence, and bring them to trial in India, or send them to England. To prevent the projects of unruly ambition, the supreme government would not be permitted to enter into any offensive treaty, or to make war, without the express command of the directors, against any power which had not commenced, or given evident proof of its intention to commence hostilities. Various other provisions were inserted, especially some relating to the settlement of disputes with the nabob of Arcot, and redress of the zemindars, who had been dispossessed of lands, or subjected to exorbitant demands. The ages at which writers and cadets should be appointed were regulated; also the number proper to be sent out: the acceptance of presents was prohibited; and all servants of the company returning to England after the first of January, 1787, were required to deliver on oath, within two months after their arrival, two copies of an inventory of their intire property, specifying what part was not acquired in India: with regard to the last head, a high tribunal was created for trying Indian delinquents, consisting of three judges, one from each court; of four peers, and six members of the house of commons, who were authorised to act without appeal; to award, in case of conviction, the punishment of fine and imprisonment; and to declare the party convicted incapable of serving the company again: no person, holding office under the crown during pleasure, or who had ever been in the Indian service, could be a member of the court. Such were the leading features of this celebrated bill. Mr. Fox exerted all his powers of discrimination to point out defects; declaring ‘that it established a weak and inefficient government, by dividing its powers; for to the one board belonged the privilege of ordering and contriving measures; to the other that of carrying them into execution. Theories, he said, which did not connect men with measures, were not theories for this world; and stigmatised the new tribunal as a screen for delinquents; as an unconstitutional violation of the sacred right of trial by jury. Since no

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man was to be tried unless accused by the company or the attorney-general, he had only to conciliate government in order to remain in perfect security: it was part of the general system of deception and delusion; and he would venture to pronounce it a 'bed of justice,' where justice would for ever sleep.' With regard to the East India charter, the objector insisted 'that it was violated by this bill as much as by his own;' whereas, on this important point, the difference was most striking: the one bill in fact left commerce in the hands of the company, while the other took it away: Mr. Fox's bill abolished the court of directors, and vested the whole patronage of India in the commissioners; while Mr. Pitt's was only a partial deviation from their charter, making such changes as their own and the public interests demanded: the former bill erected an *imperium in imperio*; the commissioners of his board being independent on his majesty's ministers, and possessing a dangerous influence in matters of war and policy; but the latter merely gave to the crown such a sway over its Indian, as it exercised over its other dependencies; ensuring a regular and systematic control over all political affairs in that vast territory.

Many other objections were started; and, as might have been expected in so extensive and important a measure, several amendments made. The chief debate on the principle of the bill took place on the day fixed for going into a committee, when the motion for the speaker's leaving the chair was vehemently opposed, but carried by a majority of 271 to 60. On communicating to the king the result of this debate, the minister received a sensible and satisfactory letter from his sovereign, expressing a hope that this measure might lay a foundation for correcting, by degrees, those enormities in India, which disgraced human nature, and threatened the expulsion of the company from that wealthy region. 'I have the more confidence,' said his majesty, 'from knowing Mr. Pitt's good sense, which will make him not expect that the present experiment shall at once prove perfect; but, by

an attentive eye, and inclination to do what is right, he will be willing, as occasions arise, to make such improvements, as may gradually bring this arduous work to some degree of perfection.'⁴

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The bill was carried up triumphantly to the house of lords; where, after an opposition vigorous in point of exertion, but insignificant in regard to numbers, it passed on the ninth of August, accompanied by a protest from lord Carlisle and other peers; which branded it as ineffectual in its provisions, unjust in its inquisitorial spirit, and unconstitutional in its partial abolition of the trial by jury.

Beside these measures, brought forward by Pitt himself, there was a variety of other business in which he took an active part; displaying therein such ability and knowledge as completely silenced those who before were continually objecting to his youth and inexperience: no one now ventured to reproach him with undertaking a task to which he was unequal; whilst all allowed that no statesman ever had a greater weight to sustain.

Before the session closed, Mr. Dundas brought before the house a very popular measure, in a motion to restore many estates in Scotland to the heirs of those who had forfeited them in the rebellions of 1715 and 1745; as there was scarcely an attainted family, in which some person had not fully atoned for the crimes of his ancestors; and the highlanders, in general, were now as loyal as any class of subjects. Since it was not meant to free these estates from claims existing against them at the time of forfeiture, which would be a premium for rebellion, the mover proposed that such sums, amounting to about £80,000, should be appropriated to public purposes; and £50,000 was destined to be employed in completing the grand canal which joins the frith of Forth to that of Clyde. This liberal measure, eulogised by Fox, was received generally in a manner which did honor to the feelings of the house; but when sent to the lords, it met with a decided opposition from lord Thurlow, who descanted

⁴ Tomline, vol. i. p. 541.

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with much satisfaction on that maxim of ancient wisdom which punished treason by a total extirpation of the fortune, name, and family of the traitor: however, on a division, this nobleman was left in a minority; the bill passed with the intire approbation of the public; and the session closed on the twentieth of August.

Popularity
of Mr. Pitt.

The power of the new minister was now fully established: he had baffled the utmost exertions of his opponents; and he enjoyed the favor of his sovereign, together with a very considerable share of popularity. Determined not to descend from this high position, he employed the remainder of the year in preparing and maturing plans which he intended to submit to parliament in the ensuing session; and he enjoyed the satisfaction of learning that his measures for improving the revenue were successful beyond expectation.

Domestic
events.

This year was marked by some memorable events unconnected with political affairs. On the twenty-fourth of March, the great seal of England was stolen from the house of lord chancellor Thurlow; and on the twenty-fourth of May, a grand jubilee, in commemoration of Handel, was celebrated in Westminster-abbey, under the especial patronage of his majesty: upwards of 600 performers were engaged, and the performances were repeated in June following: the total receipts amounted to £12,706 12s. 10d., and the profits were divided among various charitable institutions. On the fifteenth of July, Sunday schools were first opened at Gloucester by the benevolent Mr. R. Raikes; and on the fifteenth of September, Mr. Lunardi made his first ascent in a balloon, from the Artillery-ground in London. Literature lost one of its brightest ornaments in Dr. Samuel Johnson, who died in his seventy-sixth year, after a tedious and painful illness, which he bore with fortitude and resignation. Among the promotions that took place, sir James Lowther was made earl of Lonsdale, and lord Shelburne advanced to the marquissate of Lansdowne: nor did Mr. Pitt neglect to strengthen his interest in the upper house by many other creations.

In the early part of the summer, the prince of Wales was seriously indisposed, so that his life was thought to be in some danger: on his recovery, he went to pass the remainder of the season at Brighton; where he was joined by the celebrated duc de Chartres⁵ and his suite, as well as by a large party of English noblemen. This occurrence made Brighton a seat of fashionable resort, and laid the foundation of its present splendor: for the prince selected it henceforth for his summer residence; and next year began to erect a marine lodge, which has grown up by degrees to the fantastic magnificence of the Pavilion. He had now very little intercourse with his father, and was in a state bordering on disgrace at court; while the hopeless exclusion of 'his friends' from power deadened the interest which he had begun to take in politics, and left him wholly exposed to the seductions of pleasure. In habits of extravagance he soon became perfectly reckless: Carlton-house was both the subject and the scene of profuse expenditure; while his equipages and racing stud, but more especially his losses on the turf, where he had to contend with expert and unscrupulous gamesters, exhausted his income, and at length involved him in the most serious embarrassment.

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Prince of
Wales at
Brighton.

The most remarkable occurrence on the continent was the attempt of the emperor Joseph to open the navigation of the Scheldt: this project, however, was counteracted by the resolute conduct of the States-General, who entered into a treaty for that purpose with Prussia, Sweden, and France: though the finances of this latter country began to feel severely the expenses of the late war, and Louis had quietly allowed the emperor to carry several points against French interests; yet this ambitious project demanded vigorous measures: accordingly, an army of 80,000 men was prepared to co-operate with the allies, if necessary.

It was under expectations of a continental war that the British parliament met on the twenty-fifth of January, 1785, though the king's speech expressed no

Opening of
parliament.

⁵ Better known as Philip Egalité, duke of Orleans.

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Westmin-
ster scru-
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apprehensions of our being involved in it. His majesty alluded to the success attending the financial measures of last session, as an encouragement for parliament to renew the consideration of such salutary objects; and he particularly recommended to its attention the adjustment of some points in the commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland. The addresses in both houses were carried without a division.

The first business brought before the commons was the Westminster scrutiny, which occupied a large portion of time, and occasioned some very acrimonious debates: it proved an unpleasant and not very creditable business to the premier; who was said⁶ to have engaged in it from a persuasion that, within a reasonable time, a decided majority of legal votes would be substantiated in favor of sir Cecil Wray: but the slow progress, the immense trouble and expense, the outcry raised against the unrepresented state of Westminster, the charge of persecution imputed to government, and some other causes, created a change of sentiment in many of Mr. Pitt's friends; so that when alderman Sawbridge, on the third of March, moved to put an end to the scrutiny, the minister, who proposed an adjournment, was left in a minority of thirty-eight; the motion was carried without a division; and next day the high-bailiff returned lord Hood and Mr. Fox as elected: nevertheless, the house, while it condemned the measure as inexpedient, still maintained its legality; for when Mr. Francis, on the ninth of March, made a motion for expunging the resolution of the eighth of June preceding, by which the scrutiny was authorised, he was left in a minority of 137 against 242.

Mr. Pitt's
reform bill.

Public attention, however, was soon transferred from these petty proceedings to subjects of national importance, calculated to draw forth all the abilities of a statesman. Inheriting from his father a tendency to support popular rights, Mr. Pitt had been selected by the friends of reform as the fittest person to bring forward a motion for purifying the house of commons; and, though he had twice failed in his attempts, he

⁶ Tomline, vol. ii. p. 25.

still determined to persevere. The plan which he now prepared for this purpose appeared plausible and ingenious, cautiously modified and circumscribed, providing a more than adequate compensation for vested interests, and offering nothing to alarm those who connected the reformation of abuses with the destruction of ancient institutions.

Knowing the aversion felt by his royal master to disturb this part of our constitution, he laid the heads of his plan before the king, whose answer to this communication was marked by honesty and sincerity. 'Mr. Pitt,' he says, 'must recollect, that although I have ever thought it unfortunate that he had early engaged himself in this measure, yet I have always said, that as he was clear of its propriety, he ought to lay his thoughts before the house; that out of personal regard to him, I would avoid giving an opinion to any one, on the opening of the door of parliamentary reform, except to him: therefore I am certain Mr. Pitt cannot suspect me of influencing any person on this occasion. If others choose, for base ends, to impute such a conduct to me, I must bear it, as former false suggestions.'

The leading feature of this bill was, that the choice of legislators ought to be confined to those who have an interest in their acts, and therefore to be attached as much as possible to property. If that principle was established, and it was also determined not to increase the number of members in the house of commons, it would become necessary to disfranchise certain decayed boroughs, in order to form a fairer proportion between county and borough representatives; as well as to give the elective franchise to some considerable towns, which either had no votes at all, or fewer representatives than their importance demanded: it was proposed, therefore, that thirty-six boroughs, each sending two members to parliament, should be deprived of that privilege; and in their room, the counties, and the metropolis, should elect seventy-two additional members; also that copyholders, as well as freeholders, should vote for county members.

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Besides, as in the lapse of time and fluctuation of human affairs, other boroughs might become decayed, provision was made for transferring their members to populous and flourishing towns; while, to obviate any difficulty on this subject, a definitive number of houses was to be the criterion of a decayed borough: disavowing, however, all ideas of compulsion, Mr. Pitt objected to the disfranchisement of any borough against its will; and, as a voluntary surrender of its rights was not to be expected without an adequate compensation, a fund was to be established for the purpose of remunerating the proprietors of disfranchised boroughs; but if any one refused to surrender that species of property, the money was to be placed out at compound interest, until it became an irresistible bait to himself or his successor.

Such was the outline of Mr. Pitt's bill, which contained nothing to alarm the most timid patriot; for while it tended to introduce more wisdom and integrity into the national council, its operation would only be exerted from time to time, as cases arose: a clear and permanent rule for perpetual improvement in the representation of the country was laid down, equally applicable to the present and future periods; and, far from giving sanction to any vague chimerical schemes of reform, it had a manifest tendency to prevent them.

The most important animadversion in the debate upon this motion, was made by Mr. Fox, against what was denominated property, or private inheritance, acquired by a violation of the spirit of the constitution: justly distinguishing between a property and a trust, he strongly objected to the idea of purchasing the franchises of boroughs, which from their insignificance were no longer intitled to send members to parliament: 'whatever,' he said, 'was given for constitutional purposes, should be resumed when those purposes were no longer answered:' with this, and some other less important exceptions, he bestowed on Mr. Pitt's plan a very just and liberal tribute of praise.

But it was not by Fox and his party that the

minister had the mortification, if it was any mortification, to have his plan defeated. Mr. Powys, as the chief organ of those who had an interest in perpetuating abuses which Mr. Pitt designed to correct, reprobated and ridiculed his scheme, as 'the mere knight-errantry of a political Quixote;' considering it a precedent and an excitement to the wildest and most paradoxical nostrums that speculative theorists could devise: they would get by it what Archimedes wished for;—a foundation for their inventions; a *fulcrum*, from which they might throw the parliament and constitution of England into the air: he could not contemplate such a scheme with any degree of patience; he should not, therefore, treat it with the ceremony of calling for the order of the day; but as its purposes were so hostile to the constitution, so menacing and unqualified, he would meet the question in front, by giving it a direct and unequivocal contradiction. After a long debate, in which self-interest and prejudice had much more weight than sound argument, the bill was rejected by a majority of 248 to 174 voices.

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Whether Mr. Pitt was sincere in his wishes to carry this measure, it is difficult to determine: whatever may be thought of his respect for vested rights in the traffic of important trusts, his selection of the voluntary principle seems to denote considerable lukewarmness in the cause which he undertook: nothing, however, can be inferred against his sincerity from his want of success; for, as the king had previously to him, observed, 'the conduct of his friends on the Westminster scrutiny showed that there are questions, which men will not by friendship be biassed to adopt:' neither can we draw any conclusion from his subsequent opposition to parliamentary reform; for amid the new bearings and relations which political questions assumed, the object could scarcely be considered as attainable: besides, there can be no doubt, but that the machine, as then constituted, worked far better for a minister in Mr. Pitt's situation, than if it had

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Mr. Pitt's
financial
measures.

been cleared of those excrescences which time and circumstances had produced.⁷

The manner, however, in which the minister conducted his financial measures during this session, deserves unqualified approbation. After the great exhaustion occasioned by our American contest, no department required more constant inspection and revision than that of the revenue: it was from this source, above all others, that England was to assume a vigor at home and an influence abroad, which might enable her to resist, and finally subdue, that spirit of evil, which had even now began to work.

In consequence of the very able reports presented from time to time by the commissioners appointed under an act of parliament, Mr. Pitt brought in three several bills for the better keeping and auditing of the public accounts, as well as for regulating and reforming the public offices; all of which passed both houses with much applause and scarcely any opposition. The balances of the navy and ordnance offices were thereby ordered, like those of the paymaster of the forces by a former regulation, to be paid into the Bank, instead of being kept in the hands of treasurers: it was shown that in some cases these balances had been retained for a period of forty years after the treasurers themselves were out of office; and at the present time there were four distinct accounts of as many treasurers of the navy open at the pay-office. The ancient mode of proceeding by auditors of the imprest was abolished, as wholly useless, though the salary of these two officers in some years amounted to the sum of £32,000, while their duty was done by deputies and clerks; the whole system being open to fraud and collusion, and affording no check or control over the expenditure of public money. Commissioners were also appointed to inquire into fees, gratuities,

⁷ It is generally believed that Mr. Pitt continued in his heart a friend to reform; but that he abstained from advocating it, out of deference to the king's wishes. He was told by his majesty, that as he was pledged to bring forward the bill above mentioned, he had been permitted to produce it; but that he must refrain ever after from repeating the experiment.—From private information.

perquisites, and emoluments in various departments; and the whole now assumed an appearance of a regular and rational system. CHAP.
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Mr. Pitt at this time mentioned to the house, that from an inquiry which had been instituted into the accounts of different persons, from whom the enormous sum of £40,000,000 sterling was due to the public, £257,000 was ready to be paid into the exchequer, which might be applied to the service of the present year; also that farther sums would be recovered as the examination of accounts proceeded. The first regular discussion which took place respecting the general state of our finances, was on the eleventh of April; when the minister moved for an account of the net produce of taxes, in the quarters ending January 5th and April 5th, 1784 and 1785; and he took this opportunity to say, that the bills passed last session for the prevention of smuggling, and regulations adopted for the collection and management of different branches of revenue, together with an extension of trade and commerce, had already produced so great an increase in the produce of the taxes, as to justify an expectation that the income would, next year, be not only equal to its expenditure, but afford a surplus applicable to the gradual liquidation of our national debt.

On the ninth of May Mr. Pitt opened his budget, and observed, that the effects of the late calamitous war were felt in the expenses of the current year, from a necessity of fulfilling contracts entered into before the signature of the preliminary treaty. The supplies which had been voted amounted to £9,737,868, and the ways and means fell short of that sum by about one million; which, therefore, was to be provided for. The low state of the funds,⁸ and the probability of a rise before next session, inclined him not to borrow money and create stock in the ordinary way, but to obtain it from the Bank, on exchequer bills at five per cent.; by which means, not only would the rate of interest be rather less; but the money would

⁸ Three per cent. consols were at 58.

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be lent, as it might be wanted, and interest charged on the sums only from the time they were advanced. The navy and ordnance debts amounted to more than £10,000,000; and as the quantity of navy bills and ordnance debentures in circulation was the chief cause which depressed public securities, he determined to fund the whole of them: for this purpose he chose a five per cent. stock, as affording a more easy redemption; and he mentioned, that in funding £10,000,000, on the terms stipulated with the bill-holders, stock would be created to the amount of £11,140,000; the interest of which, with the expenses of management, would be about £563,000; but as an interest of four per cent. on £6,000,000, amounting to £240,000, had been provided last session, there remained, on this account, only £323,000 to be now raised: to this sum must be added £50,000, as interest on the £1,000,000 to be borrowed of the Bank; and £40,000 on account of the repeal of the duty on cotton stuffs, which had taken place this session; such duty being found injurious to our manufacturers: the whole sum, therefore, to be raised was £413,000; for which purpose he proposed an additional tax on post-horses, and one on male servants, increasing in proportion to the number kept; also taxes on female servants, shops, pawnbrokers, and gloves; with a diminution in the allowance made on salt carried coastwise.

A strenuous opposition was made to many of these taxes, especially those on shops and female servants, which were very unpopular: the bills, however, enacting them, were carried, after several divisions; but the modifications introduced by the chancellor of the exchequer, in order to obviate some of the principal objections, seemed likely to render them less productive than he originally expected: to supply this deficiency, taxes on attorneys, and on warrants of arrest, were proposed; also the game duty was increased, and coachmakers were obliged to take out a license: Mr. Pitt estimated the produce of these imposts at rather more than £413,000; and he observed, that their collection would be attended with very little expense;

since no necessity existed for the appointment of a single new officer.

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Affairs of
Ireland.

Thus did the premier restore the dilapidated finances of his country, and lay the foundation of that prosperity, which raised it to the highest rank among nations: nor did his acute and active mind suffer the present session to pass without endeavoring to allay discontents in the sister kingdom, the state of which had long occupied his anxious attention. The duke of Rutland, one of Mr. Pitt's most intimate and valued friends, had been appointed lord-lieutenant in February, 1784; and from the time of his arrival in Dublin, no important step was taken without the minister's advice and direction: but although that formidable spirit of turbulence and innovation, which threatened serious consequences, was checked for the present; it was manifest, that nothing but a great change in the commercial relations of the two countries could afford relief, and render Ireland permanently tranquil: during the prorogation of parliament therefore in that year, he spent a very considerable time in deliberation with intelligent persons, respecting a new plan of commercial intercourse; notice of his intention being given to the large trading or manufacturing towns of both kingdoms, and a committee of privy counsellors appointed to receive their information or suggestions.

The result of these conferences was brought before the Irish house of commons by the lord lieutenant's secretary, Mr. Orde, on the seventh of February, 1785; and four days afterwards, eleven propositions were passed, as the foundation of a just and equitable intercourse: on the sixteenth they met with the concurrence of the Irish house of lords; and being transmitted, with a joint address, to the king, were presented by Mr. Pitt to the British parliament, on the twenty-second of the same month: when they had been read, the minister called attention to the very important topic which they embraced, in a luminous and able speech. After observing, that from the revolution to a period within the memory of his hearers, the system

Mr. Pitt's
plan of
commercial
intercourse
with Ire-
land.

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established between the two countries had been, to make Ireland intirely subservient to the interests and opulence of England, without suffering her to profit either by the bounties of nature, or the skill of her own inhabitants, and without enabling her to contribute to the common welfare and strength of the empire;—he declared, that it was not to be expected, but that Ireland, when, by a more enlarged policy she had acquired an independent legislature, would instantly export her produce and manufactures to foreign markets: she did so: nor was this all; England, without any bargain or compact, generously admitted her to a share of the colonial trade: so much was done some years ago; but to this moment all intercourse between England and Ireland themselves remained on the old footing, except in a few trivial points; no material alteration having been made in the exportation of British manufactures to Ireland, or in the importation of Irish manufactures into Great Britain: hence it was, that great dissatisfaction existed in Ireland; and suggestions were circulated for subjecting our produce and manufactures to what were termed ‘protecting duties,’ for the purpose of preventing their introduction into the country.

Having thus far abandoned the old system of commercial domination; having wisely and justly put the Irish people into a state of profiting by the gifts of nature, and the productions of their own skill; no one, said Mr. Pitt, could wish or expect the immediate communication between the two kingdoms, regarding trade, to continue exactly as it was: there were, indeed, but two possible systems for countries situated, in relation to each other, like England and Ireland: the one was to make the smaller completely subordinate and subservient to the greater; the other was to allow to each a just participation of advantages for the benefit of both: a system, however, of commercial equality, in which there was to be a community of benefits, demanded also a community of burdens: in all former commercial concessions to Ireland, no stipulation had been made for any return; there had been gratuitous

surrenders of advantages, without the slightest compensation. In this respect, Mr. Pitt's system differed from those of his predecessors; being founded on a sounder policy of reciprocal benefits: this system, therefore, he proceeded to explain, as contained in the resolutions transmitted from Ireland, and which consisted of three general heads:—first, it was proposed, that all foreign articles directly imported into Great Britain, should hereafter be importable, under suitable provisions, through the medium of Ireland; secondly, that all articles, the produce or manufacture of either country, should be importable into the other, under a proper regulation of countervailing duties, drawbacks, and bounties; thirdly, that Ireland, in return for these benefits, should contribute to the expense of maintaining the colonies, and protecting the commerce of our empire; also that her contribution should be of such a nature, as to keep pace with the gain derived from the new system; the surplus of the hereditary revenue, above its present produce, being appropriated toward the support of our naval force.

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Having thus exhibited an outline of his plan, Mr. Pitt moved a preliminary resolution, 'for finally adjusting commercial intercourse between the two kingdoms; admitting Ireland to an irrevocable participation in the commercial advantages of England; and securing in return, a permanent aid from that country, in protecting the commercial interests of the empire.' The consideration of this important motion was deferred for a week, in order to give time for the reception of accounts and estimates: it was intimated also that farther delay would be acceded to, if there should appear sufficient reason for its proposal.

In the mean time, great apprehensions and jealousies were excited in the commercial circles of Great Britain; especially as active endeavors were made by opponents of administration to convince the public that the mercantile and manufacturing interests of this kingdom were intended to be sacrificed to those of Ireland: the alarm became general; every one expecting that his own particular branch of trade would be

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ruined; numerous petitions were presented to the house; and two months were occupied in hearing evidence on the subject, in examining the most minute details, and collecting the fullest information.

The premier, after an impartial attention to all facts and arguments that were adduced, was compelled to admit the necessity of some material changes and amendments in his original design; though he felt convinced that he might persevere in it without danger to the commerce or revenue of Great Britain: the inquiries, however, and discussions which had taken place enabled him to render his plan more complete, and better suited to the accomplishment of its object: availing himself therefore of this advantage, he submitted to the house, on the twelfth of May, the whole system matured and improved, in twenty resolutions; some of which were only explanatory of, or supplemental to, the original clauses; but others related to subjects altogether new: these latter provided, that all the navigation laws then in force, or which might hereafter be established in Great Britain, should be enacted by the Irish legislature; that no West Indian produce, except that of our own colonies, should be imported into Ireland; which country should not be allowed to trade to the East Indies, so long as the company's charter continued: regulations also were introduced respecting patents, copyright in books, and the right of fishing on the coasts of the British dominions.

In explaining the nature and tendency of his whole series of resolutions, Mr. Pitt displayed enlarged and comprehensive views of general principles in trade and commerce; ingeniously applying them to the circumstances of the two countries. A long debate ensued, in which a motion by lord North for an immediate adjournment, was lost by a majority of 281 to 155, and the first resolution passed: when the second was proposed, Mr. Pelham moved an adjournment, which was rejected by 249 against 125; and the resolution, as moved by Pitt, was carried at six o'clock in the morning; after which the house adjourned. In this

and other debates on the remaining resolutions, numerous objections were urged by members of opposition, among whom Fox and Sheridan took leading parts, in accordance at once with the prejudices of English manufacturers, and the feelings of Irish patriots: the former affected to regard the measure as fatal to British interests; the latter indignantly rejected for Ireland, a boon coupled with conditions for the surrender of her legislative independence: but in correct views of political economy the advantage throughout this discussion was greatly on the side of the minister; in favor of whose views Mr. Jenkinson greatly distinguished himself, incidentally advancing several of those liberal principles of trade, which have since been more fully developed and acted on by practical statesmen: finally, after an obstinate contest, the resolutions all passed the house of commons, and on the thirtieth of May were carried up to the lords. Here they again afforded a subject for long and laborious investigation; in the course of which, lords Stormont and Loughborough strenuously exerted themselves on the side of opposition: various amendments, not very important in their nature, were offered and received by the house; and the resolutions were returned to the commons on the nineteenth of July. After renewed and vehement debates, the amendments were accepted; and on the twenty-ninth an address was presented to the king by both houses, acquainting his majesty with the steps taken in this affair; adding, 'that it remained for the parliament of Ireland to judge of the conditions according to their wisdom and discretion, as well as of all other parts of the settlement proposed to be established by mutual consent.' On the second of August Mr. Pitt introduced a bill, founded on the above resolutions, which was ordered to be printed: the house then adjourned to the twenty-seventh of October; by which time it was hoped that the Irish parliament would have come to a conclusion on this important subject.

All, however, who entertained such hopes were destined to be disappointed: so strong a prejudice had been excited in Ireland, by party spirit and the arts of

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designing men, against the additions and alterations introduced into this measure, that a powerful opposition was arrayed against it even before the meeting of parliament: the provision respecting the navigation laws was considered as an infringement on the legislative independence of Ireland; and the appropriation of the surplus of hereditary revenue, with the prohibition of trade to the East Indies, was represented as reducing the country to little less than a state of slavery. Unfortunately, the Irish at this time were taught to view every thing which originated in England with jealousy and mistrust, as concealing hostile intentions under the guise of friendship: besides, there always existed a large body of men, who, from various causes, but chiefly from hostility to protestant ascendancy, were anxious to produce a separation of the two kingdoms; and who never failed to encourage and foment any discontent which might arise with respect to the conduct of Great Britain.⁹

On the twelfth of August, Mr. Orde introduced a bill into the Irish house of commons, similar to that which Mr. Pitt had carried through the British parliament; but the eloquence of the two great rival orators, Grattan and Flood, was combined against it, and the influence of the country gentlemen brought to bear on what they were taught to consider an oppressive measure. In a speech of great vigor and brilliancy, Grattan observed, that this was called a system of concession and compensation: 'but,' said he, 'the people of Ireland obtained, without compensation, a colonial trade, a free trade, the government of their army, the extinction of unconstitutional powers in the council, the restoration of judicature to their lords, and finally the independence of their legislature. Let them now see what they obtain by compensation: a covenant not to trade beyond the Cape of Good Hope, and the straits of Magellan; a covenant not to take foreign plantation produce, nor American produce, but as Great Britain shall permit; a covenant never to protect their own manufactures, never to guard the

⁹ Tomline, vol. ii. p. 91.

primum of those manufactures: surely some god presided over the welfare of Ireland, who made it wisdom to fulfil their duty, and who annexed the penalties of folly as well as infamy to the surrender of their privileges.'

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The feelings of Irish legislators corresponded with those of the people; and scarcely could the great and acknowledged talents of Mr. Fitzgibbon,¹⁰ procure attention to his vindication of this important measure. He concluded an able speech on the subject, by remarking, 'that whatever might have been intimated concerning the possibility of Ireland standing alone, he was convinced, that, situated as she was in the neighborhood of powerful popish countries, with a majority of her people of the popish religion, she could not exist one hour as a protestant state, if the protection of England were withdrawn.' After a vehement debate, the house divided at nine in the morning, on the motion of Mr. Orde; ayes 127, noes 108: such a division in the first stage of the business, was equivalent to a defeat; and a few days afterwards, when the secretary moved the first reading and printing of the bill, he declared that he did not intend to proceed any farther with it in the present session.

Failure of
Mr. Pitt's
plans in
Ireland.

The failure of this plan was a severe disappointment to Mr. Pitt, who had labored assiduously for nearly twelve months in making it as perfect as its complicated nature would allow. Ireland, by her acceptance of it, might have averted many of those evils which she subsequently endured; for, being in itself, as Mr. Grattan called it, 'an incipient and creeping union,' it would have prepared the way less violently for the completion of that great measure; sparing at least the corruption which characterised its preliminary stages: but the pride of Irish independence took alarm; and the British minister prudently yielded to the present clamor, looking forward with great confidence to a change of sentiment at no very distant period.

During the progress of this unsuccessful attempt at establishing commercial intercourse the Irish volunteers

Popular
meetings
in Ireland.

¹⁰ Afterwards lord Clare.

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had been exerting all their influence to excite a spirit of hostility toward Great Britain: a reform in parliament was their professed object; and for this purpose they had recourse to a very unconstitutional and dangerous expedient. On the seventh of June, 1784, they called a general meeting of the citizens in Dublin, at which a variety of resolutions were passed; among others, that the people had an unalienable right to correct any abuses which had crept into the representative system; and that the present house of commons was notoriously venal and corrupt: it was also agreed to circulate an address, exciting the great body of the people to a zealous co-operation in the work of reform, and recommending that Roman catholics should be admitted to the elective franchise: farther, they agreed to petition his majesty for a dissolution of the present parliament; in accordance with which views, they proposed, 'that five persons should be elected from each county, city, and large town, to meet on the twenty-fifth of October in national congress.' Having applied to the duke of Rutland to convey their petition to the king, his excellency informed them, that, although he should, according to his duty, forward it as desired, he should feel obliged to accompany it with strong expressions of his disapprobation; for it contained unjust and indecorous reflections on the laws and parliament of Ireland, and tended to foment fatal dissensions among her people. A petition of the same character, sent by the inhabitants of Belfast to Mr. Pitt, met with a similar rebuke: in the mean time, the sheriffs of Dublin had by public advertisement summoned a meeting of citizens for the twentieth of September, to elect five delegates to the general congress; but, being apprised by the attorney-general of the illegality of such conduct, they dissolved the assembly without proceeding to an election; and, their successors having declined to summon another for the same purpose, it was held on the eleventh of October without their authority. This meeting passed some strong resolutions declaratory of their right to assemble for the redress of grievances, and announcing a deter-

mination to protect, by every effort, those of their countrymen who might become victims of ministerial persecution, for supporting by constitutional means the privileges of the nation: on the other hand, an assembly of the lord mayor, sheriffs, and freemen on the sixteenth voted an address to the lord lieutenant, expressing extreme grief for the violence which had long reigned among the people, and gratitude for the exertions made to suppress disorders by which the kingdom was disgraced. Requesting his excellency's good offices to procure for them more equal representation in parliament, as well as the advantages of an equitable and permanent commercial intercourse, they professed unshaken attachment to the principles of the constitution; engaging to protect by every constitutional method, the protestant establishment against any attacks by which it might be assailed. A few months afterwards, they voted an equally loyal address to the king, which was signed by 21 peers and 1121 commoners.

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In the mean time, the attorney-general entered a prosecution by attachment against Mr. Reilly, high-sheriff of the county of Dublin, who had called and presided at a meeting of freeholders for the election of delegates; and the court of king's bench subjected him to a fine of five marks, with a week's imprisonment: other magistrates guilty of the same offence were similarly punished; as, also, were the printers and publishers of newspapers, in which the illegal resolutions were inserted. The congress met on the twenty-fifth of October; but, very few delegates being present, it sat only three days; and then, after passing some resolutions, adjourned to the thirtieth of January, 1785; on which day about two hundred attended; and these, after sitting till the fourth of February, adjourned to the twentieth of April; when they declared their meeting to be final. Having passed several resolutions respecting a more equal representation in parliament, and another application to the house of commons, they published a brief address to the Irish people, as their last act; and with this

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meeting expired the influence of the volunteers. The difference of opinion which had arisen among them, relative to the important point of admitting Roman catholics to the right of suffrage, created a disunion; and when, in an address to their general, the earl of Charlemont, they intimated that it was expedient to invite those religionists to assist them in the attainment of their grand object, a reformation of the house of commons, that nobleman declared his aversion to connect the cause of reform with that of papists. On the twelfth of May, a bill introduced by Mr. Flood for a parliamentary reform was rejected, on the second reading, by 112 votes to 60; and thus ended all attempts in Ireland to effect it for the present; though there remained a discontented and turbulent spirit in the country, which soon broke out into disorders of a more dangerous character.

Affairs
on the
continent.

Some occurrences took place this year on the continent, which led to important results. The emperor Joseph, who often busied himself with projects inconsistent with each other, and which he rarely put into execution, had last year formed a plan to exchange his sovereignty in the Low Countries for the electorate of Bavaria; a very desirable acquisition for the aggrandisement of Austria. This scheme being made known to the duke of Deux Ponts, who was presumptive heir to the Bavarian dominions, he disclosed it to the king of Prussia, and claimed his interposition as guarantee of the treaty of Teschen. Frederic, now on the very verge of the grave, again saw his system endangered, but he did not again unsheathe the sword: by his wise and prudent counsels, he formed, in union with his successor, a strong confederation for preserving the German constitution, of which Prussia was the centre. Conquering long-cherished prejudices, the old warrior now made advances to England; and the elector of Hanover joined the league, to which Saxony had already acceded, as well as Brunswick; and which was afterwards augmented by Mentz, Hesse Cassel, Mecklenburg, Anhalt, and other states. Joseph, greatly incensed by this opposition, made vigorous

preparations for war, but prudently determined to proceed no farther in the meditated exchange; and the threatened storm insensibly died away.

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While the emperor's attention was thus drawn toward Germany, the Dutch were intent on warding off the blow which he meditated against them: their chief reliance was on the court of Versailles, which, at the instigation of the count de Vergennes, had sent the marshal de Maillebois to take the command of their forces; negotiations were carried on, during the summer, for an accommodation under the mediation of France; and preliminary articles of peace were signed at Paris, in September, after the deputies of the States-General had humbly apologised for the insult which had been offered to the emperor's flag, when he attempted to force the navigation of the Scheldt. A definitive treaty was concluded in November; by the articles of which his sovereignty over that river, from Antwerp to the limits of Saftingen in Dutch Flanders, was recognised; but from that point to the sea it was to remain with the States: and thus the free navigation to Antwerp was frustrated: the emperor also renounced his claims against Maestricht, on payment of a large sum of money by Holland.

A treaty of alliance between the Dutch republic and the king of France followed this peace: its stipulations were calculated to draw as closely as possible the bonds of amity and mutual defence; while in commercial affairs each was to be treated by the other as the most favored nation: the French having now gained a strong influence in the Dutch counsels, that party which had always opposed the high authority vested in the stadtholder, was urged to pursue with vigor their schemes to abolish his office, or, at least, to abridge its prerogatives; and the bodies of volunteers, to which late dissensions and dangers had given rise, stirred up a democratic spirit, which arraigned the authority both of the stadtholder and of the aristocracy. A riot which occurred at the Hague, in consequence of some volunteers appearing with their badges in that town, which was zealously devoted to the house

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of Orange, gave a pretext to the acting committee of the States for depriving the prince of his government of the Hague, and of his body-guard; in consequence of which affront he retired to his own city of Breda, and sent his family to West Friesland: the king of Prussia sent a remonstrance to the States on this treatment of a prince closely connected with him by marriage; but it was so little regarded, that they issued an order, transferring the military honors usually enjoyed by the stadtholder to their own president and pensionary: they also absolved the troops from their oath to the prince, and enjoined a new one to be taken in the name of the States alone. Such was the prospect of affairs in this part of the continent at the close of the year. The British parliament, which had been adjourned to the twenty-seventh of October, did not re-assemble, but was prorogued by royal proclamation.

CHAPTER XXIX.

GEORGE III. (CONTINUED.)—1786.

Meeting of parliament—Bill for the establishment of an effectual fortification of the dockyards at Portsmouth and Plymouth introduced by Mr. Pitt—Is lost by the casting vote of the speaker—Mr. Pitt's proposition of an efficient sinking fund is approved by both houses, and receives the royal assent—Bill for the prevention of frauds in the revenue passed—East India company empowered to make an addition to their stock—Improvements in the government of India—Impeachment of Warren Hastings—Close of the session—Margaret Nicholson's attempt on the life of the king—Commercial treaty with France—Convention with Spain—Dr. Seabury, bishop of Connecticut, consecrated at Aberdeen—Scottish episcopalians transfer their allegiance to the house of Hanover—Pecuniary embarrassments of the heir apparent—Deaths of the princess Amelia and Frederic of Prussia.

PARLIAMENT met on the twenty-fourth of January, after a tranquil interval of a few months, during which the flourishing state of British trade, together with the announced project of Mr. Pitt to reduce the public debt by a sinking fund, had raised the three per cent. consols to seventy; so great was the confidence reposed by the mercantile and monied interests in the talents and integrity of the new chancellor of the exchequer.

Meeting of
parliament.

In the king's speech, his majesty declared to the house of commons his earnest wish to enforce economy in every department of the state, while he expressed great satisfaction at the prosperous condition of our affairs, in the extension of trade, the improvement of revenue, and the increase of public credit, relying on their continued zeal and industry for the farther ad-

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vancement of these important interests : he recommended to attention the maintenance of our naval power on the most respectable footing ; and, above all, a fixed plan to reduce the national debt, for which the improved state of our finances afforded such facilities. The topics of this speech, and the corresponding address, offered but little opportunity for animadversion to the opposition : Mr. Fox, therefore, being excluded from the field of domestic policy, expatiated widely over that of our foreign relations ; and attempted to prove that the accession of his majesty to the Germanic confederation, as elector of Hanover, would disgust the emperor, and indispose him to an alliance with Great Britain in case of any future war. Having reviewed the interests and relations of the various continental states, he deduced from them certain principles of alliance which seemed most expedient for this country to adopt : from the intimate connexion existing between France and Spain, he thought that Austria was the only power, whose co-operation with us, by imposing on France the necessity of continental exertions, could prevent her from again making such extraordinary efforts by sea as had astonished Europe during the last war : he adverted to a favorable opportunity for alliance with Russia which had been lost ; and, in alluding to a treaty about to be established between Great Britain and France, he strongly reprobated the policy of such a measure ; appealing to the experience of past ages for a proof that England had always prospered in proportion as she had relinquished her commercial connexions with that country. After some strictures on the Irish propositions and the India bill, he concluded a speech, which, according to the parliamentary tactics of opposition on the first day of session, exhibited a copious statement of implied errors and miscarriages in administration.

Mr. Pitt, in the introductory observations of his reply, exposed his antagonist's mode of attack, by observing, that he dexterously left out of discussion such parts of a subject as did not suit his purpose, while he introduced those that might be favorable to

it, however foreign they were to the question: at the same time he declared his intention, to which in the course of their parliamentary warfare he generally adhered, that, let Mr. Fox range ever so widely over extraneous matters, he should confine his answers to what he conceived applicable to the question at issue: such a plan had frequently succeeded with lord North; who, being inferior to his antagonist, naturally followed where the other chose to lead: but Mr. Pitt was of a different cast and character; disciplined by reflection, and powerful in talents, he could take his own ground, and maintain it in any mode which he judged expedient; he was, therefore, not to be disconcerted by the evolutions of an adversary: in the present debate, he observed, various topics had been introduced which were neither under the control of the house, nor sufficiently advanced to admit of discussion: objections, therefore, were improper in the one case, and premature in the other. Fox replied, by putting his observations in a new light, without advancing any thing new in argument; and, as no general debate ensued, the address was carried without a division.

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Nothing remarkable occurred in the house before the middle of February, when the minister called its attention to a plan originating with the duke of Richmond, to fortify the dockyards of Portsmouth and Plymouth. That nobleman had viewed with alarm the danger impending over those important arsenals during the late war; which, as he thought, accident only had preserved from hostile armaments; and, having paid particular attention to gunnery and fortification, he became anxious, from the time he presided over the board of ordnance, to employ these sciences in our national defence. In the preceding session, this scheme had been brought before the commons, who expressed themselves unwilling to vote money for its execution until they had ascertained the opinions of persons qualified to decide on the utility of such a measure; it was accordingly referred to a board of military and naval officers, whose report was stated

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The discontent and surprise manifested when this question was previously under discussion, now rose into great warmth and indignation; for it was said, 'if the report, or the essential matters contained therein, were not to be inspected, the house stood exactly in the same situation as before the appointment of the board: they must still decide, not on their own judgment, but on the authority of others: it was well known that the expense of this new system would be enormous; and it was their duty, before they adopted it, to be fully convinced of its propriety.' Moreover general Burgoyne, and some others, controverted the alleged unanimity of the board: 'the case had been hypothetically put to them; and it was only on admission of the hypothesis that they gave an opinion respecting the utility of the plan: it remained to be ascertained whether the case thus hypothetically put, namely, the absence of the fleet, or its inability to protect the places in question, came sufficiently within the limits of probability to deserve attention. Several of the naval officers had explicitly declared fortifications to be unnecessary; and a majority of the military men hesitated to recommend them in the present state of the country: they merely assented to their alleged necessity, if the country could afford no other means of defence; and this limited acquiescence was interpreted by the master-general of the ordnance into an approbation of his plan.'

Mr. Pitt waived all farther discussion of the question at present; but after a short time he brought it more specifically before the house, in a regular motion, 'to provide effectually for the dockyards of Portsmouth and Plymouth, by a permanent system of fortification, as essential to the safety of the state.'

Hence a vehement debate arose; in which it was contended by one party, that, according to the confession of the board, neither naval nor military force could afford our dockyards such protection as their

importance demanded, without the aid of fortifications: the present plan was recommended as most applicable; as capable of being manned by the smallest force; and requiring the least expense: such works, it was said, would give a larger range of action to our fleets, by leaving them so far unfettered; while they would tend to reduce the standing army, and permit a greater number of forces to act at a distance in case of invasion.

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These arguments were not left uncontroverted by the other party; but the speaker who chiefly distinguished himself was Mr. Sheridan, a parliamentary orator, now rising fast to political fame. On the present occasion he exhibited the substance of all the reasoning that could be urged against the scheme; which, he contended, was in itself and in its consequences dangerous and unconstitutional. 'These strongholds,' said he, 'maintained by numerous and disciplined garrisons, will afford tenfold means of curbing and subduing the country more than would arise from doubling the present army establishment. Can any one imagine that the system now recommended will end with Portsmouth and Plymouth? may we not figure to ourselves the same board of officers, acting under the same instructions, and deliberating with the same data, while they take a circuit round our coast? The reasons which justify this measure in the present instance, will apply to every port in the kingdom which is sufficiently important to require defence: but the whole plan proceeds on two suppositions extremely improbable; first, that we shall be so inferior on our own seas as to permit an enemy to land; secondly, that if they do land, they will choose to attack the only places which we have fortified: if such is to be our defence, there must be a circle of fortresses round our shores; but the safety of England rests on the courage and enterprise of its people, not on ramparts and fortifications. After all, however,' said Mr. Sheridan, 'the plan is unauthorised by the report of the board: the opinion of naval officers has been withheld; but the opinion of military officers is

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founded on hypothetical or conditional suggestions, and on such data as were proposed to them; for the truth or probability of which they have invariably refused to make themselves responsible.' In this part of his speech, the orator ingeniously played with the terms of the act in question, and diversified his course of reasoning with an interspersion of wit at the expense of the master-general. 'The noble duke,' said he, 'deserves high praise for the striking proofs he has given of his genius as an engineer, which appear in the planning and constructing of the report in question: the professional ability of the master-general shines as conspicuously there as it could on our coasts: he has made it an argument of posts, and conducted his reasoning on the principles of trigonometry as well as logic: there are certain detached data, like advanced works, to keep the enemy at a distance from the main object of debate: strong provisions cover the flanks of his assertions; and his very queries are in case-mates; no impression, therefore, is to be made on this fortress of sophistry by desultory observations; but it is necessary to sit down before it, and assail it by regular approaches: it is fortunate however that, notwithstanding all the skill employed by the noble and literary engineer, his mode of defence on paper is open to the same objection which has been urged against his other fortifications; that if his adversary gets possession of one of his posts, it becomes strength against him, and the means of subduing his whole line of argument.'

On this occasion the minister found himself deserted by many of his adherents, and by the independent interest generally, who were adverse to the present measure: so that none of his arguments, though enforced with the whole power of his eloquence, could at this time overcome the prejudices conceived against fortifications: on a division, the numbers were found exactly equal, 169 on each side; and the speaker gained considerable credit by giving his casting vote against the resolution. Mr. Pitt greatly lamented this failure; thinking that the measure might, in the event of war, have been essentially serviceable to the nation.

One of the most striking features in this minister's financial policy remains to be noticed; that is, the establishment of an efficient sinking fund for the edemption of the national debt. A similar fund had been formed in the year 1716, by sir Robert Walpole; but was afterwards so frequently diverted from its original destination, both by himself and his successors in office, that when Mr. Pitt was placed at the head of the treasury, the constant practice was to apply it wholly to the ways and means of the current year. Such an alienation of the sinking fund was the more to be lamented, because, though at first it amounted only to half a million, it greatly increased soon after its establishment, and again at subsequent periods, in consequence of a progressive reduction of the interest of the national debt.

Through the misappropriation of this fund, the diminution of the debt, which went on very rapidly during war, became so slow in time of peace, that from its origin in 1716 to the present time, £200,000,000 had been borrowed during twenty-five years of war, and less than £22,000,000 paid off in forty-five years of peace; so that the national debt had risen, at the end of the American contest, to such a height as to form a subject of great anxiety and alarm: the general impression was, that the funding system could not be carried beyond a certain extent; and it was apprehended that we were approaching that limit, the transgression of which might involve us in all the untold evils of a national bankruptcy: new loans might be demanded by a new war; and to suffer our debt to remain in its present state was to invite aggression: the commissioners of public accounts declared that 'the evil admitted not of procrastination, palliation, or expedients; it pressed onwards, and must be met with force and firmness, or serious consequences would ensue;' and the means by which so desirable a purpose as that of prevention might be best accomplished had long occupied the thoughts of speculative persons.

The premier, having announced his intention of submitting to parliament a proposal on this subject,

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received an incredible number of schemes and projects; but, after weighing every suggestion to which any regard seemed due, as well as applying the most anxious attention of his fertile mind to the subject, he felt convinced that no method could be devised so little liable to danger and objection as the simple plan of purchasing stock at the market price on behalf of the public; provided this were accompanied with the strongest provisions and guards possible, to render the fund so applied unalienable, and to secure its increase at compound interest.¹ These provisions, indeed, and this power of increase, were new and distinguishing features in the plan, from which its great utility was derived.

As a preparatory step, therefore, on the seventh of March, Mr. Pitt moved for the appointment of a select committee of nine persons, of which Mr. William Grenville was chairman, for the purpose of reporting on the state of our public revenue and expenditure; the result of which inquiry, being laid before the house on the twenty-first, proved highly satisfactory. The amount of revenue for the current year was estimated at £15,397,000; while the permanent expenditure, including the civil list and interest payable on the various funds, amounted to £10,554,000: the peace establishment, allowing 18,000 men for the navy, and the usual complement of seventy regiments, exclusive of life-guards and cavalry, was estimated at £3,924,000; in all £14,478,000: consequently, there remained a surplus of more than £900,000, applicable to the diminution of the national debt: but as the fund for that purpose ought to be a million, Mr. Pitt proposed to move in this committee such taxes² as would produce £100,000 per annum; which sum, he was happy to say, could be raised without any material pressure on the public. He observed, that although £14,478,000 was calculated as the annual expenditure, some time must elapse before it could be reduced to

¹ Tomline, vol. ii. p. 143.

² These were an additional duty on spirits, a modification of the tax on foreign timber, and taxes on perfumery and hair powder.

that sum: we had but just emerged from a ruinous and expensive war; and many of its burdens did not end with it: nevertheless, they ought not to be considered as forming part of our annual expenditure; for they must cease after a short time.

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On the other hand, there were sums appropriated during the war to various services, which had not been expended; and £450,000 had already been paid into the exchequer on this account: immense arrears also remained in the hands of former paymasters; and there was a balance of £600,000 due to government from the East India company: when to this were added improvements that might yet be made by judicious regulations in the different branches of revenue, he thought he was not too sanguine in affirming that we possessed resources equal to all our ordinary and extraordinary demands. The proposition, therefore, which he now submitted to the house, was, that the annual sum of one million be appropriated unalienably to a liquidation of the national debt: also, that the same should be vested in the hands of commissioners, to be by them expended quarterly in the purchase of stock; so that no sum should ever lie within grasp, sufficiently large to tempt any one to violate this sacred deposit: the interests, annually discharged, were to be added to, and incorporated with, the original fund; so that it would operate with an accelerated velocity: it was also to be assisted by annuities granted for different terms, which would from time to time fall in, within the period of twenty-eight years; at the expiration of which, Mr. Pitt calculated that his sinking fund would produce an income of four millions per annum; while it would have liquidated 100 millions of the three per cents.: the parliament of that day might then decide whether the fund should still go on increasing at compound interest. The commissioners to be nominated under this act, were the speaker of the house of commons, the chancellor of the exchequer, the master of the rolls, the governor and deputy-governor of the bank of England, and the accomptant-general of the high

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court of chancery; persons, whose rank and distinction would secure them from all suspicion in the discharge of their important duties: Mr. Pitt concluded his speech, by congratulating himself that he had a task to perform so different from that of his predecessors; and that instead of expending the public money, he had the good fortune to propose a diminution of our national burdens.

The only amendment of any importance on this plan was suggested by Fox, 'that whenever a new loan should be made, the commissioners might be empowered to accept such proportion of it, as should be equal to the cash then in their hands; the interest and *douceur* annexed to which should be applied to the purposes of the sinking fund:' at the same time, he expressed high approbation of the bill; adding, that he hoped this agreement between Mr. Pitt and himself 'would be a good precept, and an example for posterity to follow.' The amendment thus proposed was readily and candidly accepted by the premier; who, joining heartily in Mr. Fox's concluding wish, expressed his singular satisfaction at having that gentleman's concurrence in the bill itself: it passed both houses without a dissentient voice; and on the twenty-sixth of May his majesty gave assent to it in person. Thus did the minister, who at his entrance into office found an annual deficiency of several millions in our revenue, contrive in two years not only to render it equal to the expenditure, but to obtain a surplus of one million for the reduction of the debt; which sum he applied in a manner so simple and efficacious, as to extort from all parties unqualified approbation: wise and salutary, however, as the measure appeared at the time, human foresight could never have anticipated its beneficial effects on this country, by the support which it gave to public credit.

In subordination to his great plan of financial reform, the premier now turned his attention to the enormous frauds committed on the revenue in the article of wine; these he corrected, by transferring most of the duties from the customs to the excise;

and making those on what are called sweets, and which are used for the adulteration of foreign wines, equal to the duties on wine itself. This measure he effected, after six divisions in the house of commons, against all the efforts of Fox to render it unpopular, and the obstruction given to it by those engaged in the trade, as well as by others, who urged the difficulty of applying the excise laws to wine, and the impolicy of extending those laws beyond their present limits: but the principles of commerce and taxation were better understood now, than they were in the days of sir Robert Walpole; while the public felt convinced that the state of our revenue demanded the adoption of every measure tending to its improvement. The value of Mr. Fox's objections to the beneficial reforms which his powerful antagonist was making in our financial system, may be estimated from his own acknowledgement, that he had never read the great work of Adam Smith 'On the Wealth of Nations;' and from the observations which he addressed to the gentleman who has recorded that confession. 'There is something,' said he, 'in all these subjects, which surpasses my comprehension; something so wide, that I could never embrace them myself, nor find any one who did.'³

The next beneficial measure which Mr. Pitt carried through parliament, had a reference to frauds committed on the customs, by false accounts of imported goods, and the relanding clandestinely such as had received bounties or drawbacks at their exportation. To prevent such injurious practices, he brought in, what was called 'the manifest act;' which ordered that no articles should be imported into Great Britain before the master of the vessel had delivered to the custom-house officer a manifest, stating the place where they were laden, with a full description verified on oath; also, that no vessel should sail from a British port, till the master had given a bond for £200, that he would not reland any part of its cargo illegally; also, that no goods, intitled to bounty or drawback,

³ Butler's Reminiscences, p. 178.

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should be put on board for exportation, except by persons duly licensed. Toward the end of the session, this active minister applied himself to ascertain whether the crown lands could not be rendered more productive; for which purpose he moved for the appointment of commissioners to inquire into the state of woods, forests, and land revenues belonging to the crown, as well as to alienate fee-farm and other unimprovable rents: this measure, though opposed in the house of lords, was ultimately carried.

Debates on
India.

The sale of tea at the India-house had, in consequence of the commutation-tax, and the preventive measures taken against smuggling, increased from five and a half to fourteen millions of pounds; which enlarged trade, and some other circumstances, induced the company to apply to parliament for an act empowering them to make an addition to their funds: a petition to this effect was offered to the house of commons on the twenty-fifth of May, when it appeared that the sum of two millions was requisite: Mr. Pitt accordingly proposed that the company should be enabled to add £800,000 to the capital of their stock, which at the present price would produce £1,200,000; and also to sell a surplus of £36,000 a year, received from the exchequer, over and above the annuities which they paid to their creditors, which would produce £800,000. The bill, giving these powers to the company, passed after several discussions in both houses, and one division in that of the lords.

Improve-
ment in the
govern-
ment of
India.

From what Mr. Pitt had said in debate on the king's speech, it seemed as if he did not think of bringing forward any measure in the present session relative to India; but intelligence from that country, and a mature consideration of the subject afterwards, urged him to suggest certain improvements on the plan adopted in 1784: a bill was accordingly prepared and introduced into the house by Mr. Dundas in March. This, among other regulations, conferred on the governor-general a privilege of acting, in cases of high importance, without the consent of the other members of council: it also enabled the directors, if

they should deem it expedient, to unite the offices of commander in chief and governor-general in the same person; in consequence of which, earl Cornwallis, who had borne so conspicuous a part in the American war, and whose character stood very high in public estimation, was nominated to fill that important situation. The present bill proposed also to render, not only the present, but former servants of the company, whether resident in India or not, capable of being appointed to seats in the respective councils; to empower the governors of presidencies to nominate temporary successors to members of council who might die, or vacate their office: it altered a clause in the former bill, which compelled the company's servants to rise by regular gradation; and repealed that which required from them a disclosure of their property on oath: it also made several changes in the court of judicature, and mode of trial for crimes and misdemeanors in India. This measure was strongly opposed by Fox, as well as by Burke; and, at the suggestion of Sheridan, it was divided into two bills; in order that the provisions which related to the government in India, and those regarding the court of judicature in England, being distinct subjects, might be separately discussed. On the first point, it was contended, that to authorise a governor-general to act independently of his council, was to establish arbitrary power: but Mr. Dundas fully answered all objections on this score; observing, in the course of his argument, that 'all the mischiefs and misfortunes, which had for years taken place in India, had, in his opinion, arisen wholly from the party principles of members in the different councils, and the factious scenes which those councils had almost uniformly presented: the person entrusted with the administration of the country would be now invested with more power; but he would on that account have greater responsibility.' The other clauses were separately attacked and defended; and though the provisions of the second bill were not specifically objected to, the members in opposition repeated their invectives against those who deprived

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persons accused of misconduct in India, of a trial by jury, that unalienable birthright of every British subject: but their attempts to excite discontent were ineffectual; and the two bills, after several debates and divisions, passed both houses, and received the royal assent.

The only important business remaining to be noticed in the present session of parliament, relates to preparatory steps taken for the impeachment of Warren Hastings. In May, 1776, the court of directors, harassed by complaints from India, and yielding to the suggestion of lord North, had voted for his recall; but this vote was overruled by a court of proprietors: not long afterwards, Mr. Hastings authorized two friends to tender his resignation to the directors, who accepted it; and Mr. Wheeler was appointed to succeed him: but, on the return of those gentlemen to Calcutta, the governor-general denied that he had given them any such authority, and persisted in retaining his government; to which he was three times re-appointed during lord North's administration. Several of the resolutions proposed by Mr. Dundas, as chairman of the secret committee in 1782, conveyed a strong censure on Mr. Hastings; and one of them stated, that 'he had in sundry instances acted contrary to the honor and policy of this nation; bringing thereby great calamities on India, as well as enormous expenses on the company; so that it became the duty of the directors to pursue every legal and effectual method to remove him from his office:' they accordingly voted his recall; but the court of proprietors again interposed its authority; and as parliament took no farther step, he kept his station till February, 1785; when, without any previous notice, he set sail for England.

On his arrival, in June following, the directors voted him thanks for his long and meritorious services; while Mr. Dundas, who had not only moved the resolutions above mentioned, but had declared, in 1782, that 'Mr. Hastings scarcely ever left the walls of Calcutta, that his steps were not followed by the

deposition of some prince, the desertion of some ally, or the depopulation of some country,' declared in the house, 'that if he had been a director, he would have concurred in that vote;' at the same time, he expressed great joy, that the resolution which he himself had moved had not been carried into effect. However gratifying these testimonies to his character, especially from parties formerly adverse to him, may have been to Mr. Hastings, he was not equally fortunate in other quarters. Burke, who had long applied the powers of his comprehensive mind to the subject of Indian affairs, appears to have been impressed with a deep conviction of the governor's delinquency; and his influence over Mr. Fox was so great, that he easily persuaded that gentleman,⁴ as well as the members of opposition generally, to support him in a bill of impeachment: to this course they were also impelled, by a desire of taking revenge, for their fall through the India bill, on a *protégé* of the triumphant minister; nor much less by hopes of regaining popularity, in adopting the cause of the weak against the strong, and declaiming with all the force of eloquence against the principles of arbitrary power.

With regard to the virulent and personal motives which have been charged against Mr. Burke on this occasion, it may be observed generally, that whatever of wrong is discoverable in this part of his conduct, may be imputed to his imagination rather than to his heart. He had been a laborious member of the select committee on Indian affairs; and had for many years given great attention to transactions in that country, where, as an eloquent writer observes, 'the descendants of a throne, once the loftiest in the world, were reduced to stipulate with the servants of traders for

⁴ 'Fox's acquiescence,' says Mr. Nicholls, 'in the wishes of Mr. Burke on this occasion, can be attributed only to the influence which Mr. Burke had over him, and his indulgence to those with whom he acted; for he must have had the sense to see the advantage which this measure gave to his rival Mr. Pitt. Mr. Burke's importance depended on his not being disgraced by this impeachment: Mr. Pitt could at any time inflict that disgrace on him; and as Mr. Burke's influence over Fox guided the opposition, that party was, from the moment that Mr. Pitt acquiesced in the impeachment, under the control of Mr. Pitt.'—*Recollections*, vol. i. p. 173.

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subsistence; the dethronement of princes was converted into a commercial transaction; a ledger-account kept of the profit of revolutions; the sanctity of zenanas violated by search-warrants; and the chicaneries of English law transplanted, in their most mischievous luxuriance, into the holy and peaceful shades of Bramins.⁵ All these occurrences presented scenes highly calculated to excite the feelings of a man, who felt an innate detestation of oppression, and in whom a sense of duty extinguished all thoughts of difficulty or fears of danger. The prominent iniquities of Mr. Hastings's government, exhibited on so large a scale, threw the wiser and more politic measures of that statesman into the shade: to use Mr. Burke's own words, 'they constantly preyed on his peace, and dwelt night and day on his imagination;' impelling him to commit himself to a cause which demanded as great moral courage, local knowledge, and mental resources, as any which had ever been undertaken by man.

Though the charges against this delinquent had been long threatened, it was not till the present session of parliament that Mr. Burke brought them forward; being defied to the redemption of his pledge, on the very first day of its meeting, by major Scott, a confidential friend of the ex-governor. This gentleman was probably induced to throw out the challenge, by inferring, from the altered language of Mr. Dundas, that Hastings, if attacked, would receive the support of administration: that of the board of control, and of the India company, which had largely profited by his sway, was already gained. Fox, however, declared, in answer to major Scott, that if Mr. Burke should so far forget his duty, other members were fully prepared to institute the proposed inquiry; which declaration gave sufficient indication of the intentions of opposition. Pitt, whatever may be thought of the motives by which he was actuated, must have considered the whole proceeding as a seasonable diversion of the attacks of that body from himself and his administra-

⁵ Moore's Life of Sheridan, vol. i. p. 440.

tion, to an object little concerned with either; though the interest which Hastings possessed with his sovereign, and other great bodies in the state, necessarily prevented this cautious minister from showing too strong an inclination to appear in the character of an accuser: besides, he well knew, that let the matter of impeachment be carried as it would, he should always retain the power of counteracting its effects: he had not been a member either of the select or secret committee; he had taken no part in the debates on their reports; and he had delivered no opinion on the measures of Mr. Hastings's government in the house of commons: he was, therefore, at liberty to act as policy might dictate.

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On the seventeenth of February, Mr. Burke brought the subject before the house; and having requested that the resolutions of May 28, 1782, might be read, declaring the culpability of Mr. Hastings, and the consequent necessity of his recall; he expressed his 'deep regret that the solemn and important business of the day had not been brought forward, in the plenitude of weight and efficiency, by the original mover of those resolutions.' He feelingly lamented the natural demise of some, the political decease of others, and in particular cases the death to virtue and principle, which left him almost alone in an attempt to preserve unsullied the honor and consistency of that house, which had designated Mr. Hastings as an object of formal accusation. Acting under their sanction, he asserted a claim to their protection; and after giving a detailed historical account of parliamentary proceedings with regard to British India, he observed that there were three species of inquisition which might be adopted against a state culprit: the first was a prosecution in the courts below; but in the present case, not to insist on the apparent disinclination of the present attorney-general⁶ to exert his powers in the cause, he thought such a mode of trial very inadequate to the complicated nature of this offence, and the enormity of the offender: the second was a bill of

⁶ Mr. Arden.

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pains and penalties; to which he had an insuperable objection, as being unjust toward the accused, by obliging him to anticipate his defence, and by imposing on the house a twofold character of accuser and judge: the third, and only alternative, was the ancient and constitutional mode of impeachment: the first step in such a proceeding was a general review of evidence, in order that they might determine whether the person charged ought to be impeached or not; with this view, he proposed that the house should resolve itself into a committee; and he afterwards moved for the production of papers, to form a general ground of accusation. No objection was made to the production of such as were then specified; but as he continued at subsequent meetings to move for other documents, Pitt raised objections, which Mr. Burke characterised as 'invading the prerogative of a public accuser: he had an unquestionable claim to all such documents, proofs, and papers, as he knew or thought necessary to support the charge which he advanced. When Rome felt within herself the seeds of decline and the inroads of corruption, a man of the first rank and of the highest connexions in the state was brought to trial: Verres, the governor of Sicilly, was united by affinity with all that was most splendid and opulent in the seat of empire; with the Hortensii and the Metelli: but when Cicero undertook his accusation, government itself adopted the prosecution; no less than 150 days were allowed for the collection of materials; and the justice of a Roman senate opened to the accuser every cabinet whence documents were to be obtained.' In the sequel, Pitt proposed, before he would agree to the requisition, that the accuser should exhibit an abstract of the charges meant to be adduced, and which the writings called for were intended to substantiate: this was done; the papers required, with some few exceptions, were granted; and on the fourth of April, Mr. Burke rose to charge Warren Hastings, Esq., late governor-general of Bengal, with high crimes and misdemeanors in the execution of his office; exhibiting, at the same time, nine distinct articles of accusation,

to which he added thirteen others in the following week. Mr. Hastings, who had been furnished with copies of these articles, as they were produced, was allowed to read his answers at the bar of the house, and the minutes of his defence were ordered to lie on the table: the examination of witnesses lasted three weeks; toward the end of which time Burke declared his intention to adopt Mr. Pitt's suggestion, by taking the sense of the house on each charge separately: accordingly, on the first of June, the article of impeachment was brought forward respecting the Rohilla war.

This question was debated two nights, and the house did not divide till eight o'clock in the morning, when the motion was negatived by a majority of 119 to 67. Pitt gave a silent vote with the majority on that occasion; coinciding in opinion with Mr. Dundas and Mr. William Grenville, who contended that this war, as far as Mr. Hastings was concerned, was both just and politic, its scenes of cruelty and extirpation being violently exaggerated by Mr. Burke's eloquence; that the British governor was not responsible for any acts of cruelty committed by Sujah Dowla; that it was unfair to call a person to account for transactions after a lapse of thirteen years;⁷ and that, in truth, Mr. Hastings had by implication been acquitted of any blame in the transaction, having been three times re-appointed governor-general of Bengal by parliament since its conclusion: this Mr. Pitt, on another occasion, called 'the highest certificate of legislative approbation.' Fox more justly attributed the confederacy between the nabob of Oude and the governor to an iniquitous spirit of rapacity, for which he severely condemned them both: Mr. Powys also, reprobating the extirpatory violence of the nabob and his English ally, concurred in the motion; as also did lord North, although he was the person who introduced those very acts into parliament, which conferred on Mr. Hastings 'the certificate of its approbation.'

⁷ This certainly was a very extraordinary assumption.

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On the thirteenth of June, Fox brought forward the charge relative to Cheyt Sing, rajah of Benares, which stood third on the list; when he accused Mr. Hastings of making an unjust demand of troops and money from that prince; of exacting from him an exorbitant fine, when he hesitated to comply with that demand; and of causing him to be seized in his own palace, and treated with great cruelty and indignity. The chief arguments in favor of an acquittal on this charge, were introduced in Pitt's speech, though even he came to a conclusion that it contained matter of impeachment. After Mr. Francis had seconded the motion, and Mr. Nicholls spoken in opposition to it, the minister commenced a long and argumentative harangue, in which he entered at large into the nature of those bonds which unite Indian zemindars to their feudal lords; showing how they are obliged, on occasions of great emergency, to grant extraordinary supplies. Pursuing his inquiry, he next showed how the father of Cheyt Sing had acquired his territory from the nabob of Oude, on the very condition of furnishing him, who was lord paramount, with extraordinary aids, as well as an annual rent: to this inheritance Cheyt Sing had succeeded; while the sovereignty of Benares had been transferred to the company, with all its rights, of which the one in question had always been acknowledged, and had never been revoked by any powers or immunities which were at subsequent times conveyed to the rajah. The next two points established by Mr. Pitt, were the exigency that justified the governor in making a demand of extraordinary assistance, and the ability of Cheyt Sing to comply with its terms; after which he proceeded to what he considered as the best-founded part of the charge, the punishment inflicted on the rajah: the conduct of Mr. Hastings, subsequent to the demand of troops and money, was in his opinion oppressive and tyrannical; since the fine which he determined to levy was beyond all proportion to the fault committed: in fining Cheyt Sing £500,000 for a mere delay to pay £50,000, the governor had acted in a manner which

destroyed all relation between the degrees of guilt and punishment. Confining himself, therefore, to the exorbitancy of this fine, without including the subsequent revolution of Benares, the deposition of the rajah, and the ravages committed by the company's troops, Mr. Pitt agreed to the motion on the present charge, though he did not thence consider himself pledged to a final vote of impeachment: all he meant was, that if an impeachment were determined on, this act, being in his judgment a high crime and misdemeanor, should be included in its articles. Mr. Powys expressed much satisfaction at these honorable and convincing arguments; but could not help lamenting that two of the ministers for India, who spoke after him,⁸ had avowed sentiments repugnant to those of the right honorable gentleman; virtually recommending a maxim to which he never could accede—that political expediency sanctified injustice. Lord Mulgrave in reply declared, that Mr. Pitt would not deserve to be minister for a single day, if on a judicial question he expected his friends to sacrifice their opinions to his: Mr. Pitt himself regretted that any difference of opinion should exist between them; but it was an honorable difference; not about a principle, but the application of a principle: he thought the fine exorbitant, but his noble and honorable friends did not: the majority of the house concurred with Pitt, and the motion was carried by 119 votes against 79. It being found impracticable to go through the other charges in the present session, parliament was prorogued on the eleventh of July; being dismissed with assurances of the satisfaction with which his majesty had observed their diligent attention to public business; particularly the measures they had adopted for improving the resources of the country, and diminishing its debt.

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On the second of August a singular incident for a short time engrossed public attention. As the king was alighting from his chariot at the garden entrance of St. James's palace, a woman, decently dressed, pre-

Attempt on
the king's
life.

* Lord Mulgrave and Mr. William Grenville, members of the board of control.

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with France
and Spain.

sent a paper to his majesty; and while he was in the act of receiving it, struck with a knife at his breast. The king happily avoided the blow by drawing back; and as she was attempting to repeat it, one of the yeomen arrested her, and wrenched the weapon from her hand: his majesty instantly exclaimed,—‘I am not injured; take care of the poor woman; and do not hurt her.’ When examined before the privy council, she evidently appeared insane; for, on being questioned where she had lately resided, she answered, in a frantic tone, ‘that she had been all abroad since that matter of the crown broke out.’ Being further asked, what matter? she said, ‘that the crown was hers; and that if she had not her right, England would be deluged in blood for a thousand generations.’ This poor maniac, whose name was Margaret Nicholson, had presented a petition ten days before, full of incoherent nonsense: like most of such papers, it had probably not been read, or the person of the petitioner would have been secured: the idea of a judicial process was of course abandoned, and she was confined for life in Bethlehem-hospital. A public thanksgiving, however, was ordered; and addresses of congratulation flowing in from all parts of the kingdom showed the strong hold which George III. had obtained on the affections of the nation: the honor of knighthood was so liberally diffused on occasion of their presentation, that ‘a knight of Peg Nicholson’s order’ became a by-word to complete the degradation of a distinction, thought by queen Elizabeth to be a sufficient reward for the most arduous services. In the month of September, his majesty was pleased to appoint a new committee of council for the consideration of all matters relating to our trade and foreign plantations; of which board, Mr. Charles Jenkinson, now created lord Hawkesbury, was appointed president: under this commission, a treaty of commerce was, on the twenty-sixth of September, signed between the courts of England and France, to continue in force for twelve years; on the principle of admitting the commodities of each country to be freely exported and imported at

a low *ad valorem* duty: the chief negotiator was Mr. Eden, who, under the coalition ministry, had filled the office of vice-treasurer of Ireland: this was the first remarkable defection from that inauspicious alliance; and the more so, as Mr. Eden was generally considered its original projector. 'Mr. Beresford, of Ireland,' says bishop Tomline,⁹ 'was the person, through whose intervention Mr. Eden came over to administration:' he was anxious to be made speaker of the house of commons, if there should be an opening; but that project of ambition Mr. Pitt did not encourage: it was then contemplated to form a new office, and appoint him general superintendent of the revenue; but this plan being abandoned, it was resolved to send him to negotiate the commercial treaty; a business, to which he was extremely well suited: he was much consulted by Pitt on subjects of finance, and was afterwards created a peer by the title of lord Auckland. About the same time, a convention was signed with Spain, which terminated the long subsisting disputes respecting the British settlements on the Mosquito shore and the coast of Honduras: by the present treaty, the Mosquito settlements were formally relinquished, as they had been virtually by an article in the general treaty of 1783; and in return, the boundaries of those on the coast and bay of Honduras were somewhat extended. Though in a political view this convention answered a valuable purpose, by removing a source of national contention, yet it is to be regretted that the claims of humanity and justice were not sufficiently respected; for the Mosquito settlers, who had from time immemorial occupied their lands under British protection, were peremptorily ordered to evacuate the country within eighteen months; nothing farther being stipulated in their favor, than that his catholic majesty 'shall order his governors to grant them all possible facilities for removal to the settlements agreed on by the present convention.' Great consternation among the unhappy people was the consequence of this barbarous edict of

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⁹ Life of Pitt, vol. ii. p. 220, note.

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expulsion : an affecting representation of their distress, and a humble petition for some indemnification from the government which had thus abandoned them, was subsequently presented to the treasury board; but like such petitions in general, however supported by justice and equity, it seems never to have met with due attention.

Domestic
events.

At this period an interesting event happened to the persecuted episcopal church of Scotland. When the independence of the thirteen United Provinces became established, all political connexion between the episcopal churches of England and America ceased; but as an episcopal church could not exist without a head, the church of Connecticut sent over one of their body¹⁰ to be consecrated by the English hierarchy. Though the inclinations of the primate and his colleagues, on this point, corresponded fully with those of their transatlantic brethren, an insuperable object seemed to oppose the accomplishment of their wishes : the English ritual requires that the oaths of allegiance and supremacy shall be taken by the prelate about to be consecrated; but these obligations appeared incompatible with the duties of an American subject: an act of parliament, indeed, might have removed the difficulty, but the American clergy were unwilling to incur that delay; and Dr. Seabury was in consequence advised to make application to the Scotch bishops: he did so; and a correspondence took place between the heads of the episcopal churches of England and Scotland; the result of which was, that Dr. Seabury was consecrated at Aberdeen by bishops Gilgour, Petrie, and Skinner: thus the oppressed and humble branch of Zion in Scotland had the honor of founding that flourishing church, which comprehends within its pale so large a portion of the inhabitants of the new world. Nor was this all: the attention of the English hierarchy and government was drawn more strongly to the condition of Scotch episcopalians; so that a negotiation was set on foot to remove the penal laws under which they had long labored. The chief obstacle lay

¹⁰ Dr. Seabury.

in the oath of abjuration, which the episcopalians could not take, so long as Charles Edward, the grandson of James VII. of Scotland, still survived: but while measures for their relief were in progress, the unfortunate pretender died, and their allegiance was readily transferred to the house of Hanover. On the twenty-fifth of May, 1788, his majesty, king George III., was publicly prayed for in the episcopal chapels of Scotland; but there were still jealousies and prejudices to be soothed and overcome, before the friends of religious liberty could accomplish their purpose; and it was not till the year 1792, that a bill was carried through parliament, which placed the Scotch episcopalians under full protection of the law.

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The affairs of the prince of Wales at this time again attracted notice. In the beginning of the year, he had formed an acquaintance with a widow lady of the name of Fitzherbert, who, though several years older than himself, still possessed many personal attractions: the manner in which they resided together at Brighton excited general surprise; until it was first whispered, and then confidently asserted, that a marriage had been celebrated between them according to the ritual of the Roman church, to which the lady belonged: though the story appeared to many persons absurd, yet it gained so much credence as to be subsequently noticed in the house of commons. This, and other extravagances, expecially that of an extensive stud of race-horses, rendered the income allowed for the support of his royal highness totally inadequate to that purpose; and it now appeared that he had contracted debts to the amount of more than £100,000, beside £50,000 expended on Carlton-house. Under these circumstances, he applied to the king, declaring that if any part of his conduct was thought improper, he was ready to alter it, and conform to his majesty's wishes in all things that became a gentleman: the king, on receiving this communication, demanded to see a statement of the prince's affairs; but from dissatisfaction with this document, and other parts of his son's conduct, he refused to afford him any assistance.

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His royal highness then adopted the only expedient that was left to him; resolving to suppress his establishment, to stop the building and decorations going on at Carlton-house, to sell his racing stud, and to set apart £40,000 per annum for the liquidation of his debts. This conduct, however laudable, being represented to the king as precipitate and disrespectful, was thought to have increased the distance which had too long subsisted between the prince and his father; for when he hastened to Windsor on occasion of his majesty's escape from the attempt of Margaret Nicholson, the king refused to see him, although he was received by the queen; it is more probable, however, that the virtuous indignation of George III. was excited by the profligate connexions which his son appeared so prone to form. While his royal highness was in this state of embarrassment, the duke of Orleans, who was on a visit to this country, strongly urged him to accept a loan, until some favorable change should take place in his circumstances: the prince appears to have consented; but his political friends, being informed of the plan, convinced him of the great impropriety of a step, which had the perilous tendency of placing the future sovereign of England in a state of dependence on a prince of the house of Bourbon.¹¹ In consequence of such representation, the negotiation was broken off.

On the thirty-first of October died her royal highness the princess Amelia, aunt to his majesty, and last surviving issue of George II. On the continent, no event so much distinguished this year as the death of Frederic II., king of Prussia, who, for half a century, had acted the most conspicuous part among European potentates; raising his country, by his courage, fortitude, and fertility of invention, from the rank of a secondary state, to that of a large, well-compacted, flourishing kingdom. As the power of Prussia had arisen from the counsels and exertions of Frederic, many apprehended that its stability would be endangered by his death: but his provisions had

¹¹ See Moore's *Life of Sheridan*, vol. i. p. 469.

not been so temporary; his ministers had been trained by himself; and for the preservation of his dominions, he bequeathed to his successor the most effectual securities which human wisdom could devise, in a well-provided treasury, a highly disciplined army, experienced counsellors, and a people devoted to the government, institutions, and memory of their deceased monarch: the imperial powers, therefore, declined all interference with the affairs of a state so constituted and affected; besides, being already occupied with ambitious designs in other quarters, they considered it good policy to court the forbearance of Prussia, rather than provoke her to hostilities.

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CHAPTER XXX.

GEORGE III. (CONTINUED.)—1787.

General affairs of Europe—Parliament re-assembles—Committee of the house on the commercial treaty with France—Mr. Pitt's measure for consolidating the duties on the customs, excise, and stamps—Motion for a repeal of the corporation and test acts—Payment of the prince of Wales's debts—Impeachment of Warren Hastings voted by the house of commons—Prorogation of parliament—Interference with the affairs of Holland—Meeting of parliament—Continental engagements—Increase of military establishments—East Indian declaratory act—Domestic occurrences, &c.

General
affairs of
Europe.

THE death of Frederic the Great, though not immediately followed by any change in that federative union on which the balance of power had so long rested, may still be reckoned as the commencement of an era; because its most sagacious counsellor and powerful supporter was now removed from the scene. That period in the European states-system, at which we are now arrived, embraces three divisions: the first, extending to the treaty of Campo Formio, after which began the active interference of Russia in the disputes of Western Europe; the second, from that treaty to the establishment of the French imperial throne; and the third, to its overthrow, and the restoration of the old order of things by a combination of European sovereigns: at present, however, the confederative structure stood erect, apparently firm and unshaken; but the times were near at hand, in which it was destined to experience severer storms than any by which it had been hitherto assailed.

The causes of these momentous events are not

difficult to be explained: most of those governments which composed the union were in a state of decay or paralysis, of unsuccessful reform or acknowledged anarchy; while in the greatest of them all, a volcano was raging, which soon burst forth, involving that empire which was the very citadel of the confederation, and afterwards the whole continent, in its destructive torrent. Despotism had long been struggling with the rising spirit of freedom; and constitutional assemblies in the different states had either disappeared, or had been reduced to mere forms, without any kind of national representation: nor was it only in the relations between rulers and their subjects that an alteration had taken place; those also between the upper and lower ranks of society had suffered a still greater change: the nobles no longer thought of fulfilling the duties attached to their high privileges; but in proportion as the burdens of the state became oppressive, the more anxiously did they withdraw from all participation of them; so that the privileged classes were more threatened even than the sovereign powers: besides, the main strength of almost every country now lay in a standing army, between which and the citizens a broad line of distinction was drawn. One portion of the nation being armed, while the other was defenceless, what remained but submission and subjection if the army was defeated? for where existed the pecuniary resources to recruit it? not a single continental state was able to carry on war without subsidies, or some new species of extortion; the fearful consequences of which were soon afterwards unfolded.

Nor were the moral supports of the system less infirm than its political defences: the sanctity of legitimate possession having been violated, as in the open case of Poland, and in the covert designs of the family compact against Portugal, the very corner-stone of its foundation was shaken: in the contraction of alliances self-interest had become the great moving principle; no power was willing to make any sacrifices for the stability of the system; but a lust of aggrandisement prevailed; and sovereigns in council, discarding Vattel

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and Puffendorf, consulted only the map of Europe, in order to discover what territorial acquisitions they could make by fraud or violence: in the mean time, public writers had been employing that powerful instrument, the press, against every constituted authority; and when democratic principles had been widely circulated throughout Europe, the arguments for popular sovereignty received an apparent confirmation from the success of the American contest: the defenders of colonial independence returned with a load of combustible materials, ready to produce a flame whenever accident or design might kindle it; while their wishes were met and forwarded by clubs and secret societies, extensively ramified, in which social equality was inculcated, in direct opposition to that variety of condition which is inseparable from monarchical rule: even potentates themselves, like the emperor Joseph, were drawn into the vortex of this magic circle, where every thing was contrived to work on the imagination; where vice was concealed under the mask of virtue, and every species of error propagated under the illusions of sophistry. Above all things, the national religion in most states, being contaminated by disgusting ceremonies, impolitic institutions, and artifices of priestcraft, offered a fair mark to revolutionary satirists, who knew, that in destroying religious sanctions, they were sapping the very foundations of all government. Threatening as these circumstances were, few persons had any presentiment of the impending catastrophe: but, as an ingenious author has observed,¹ 'in this consisted the danger; that every thing in Europe was calculated for the usual state; while every thing was thrown out of its course, as soon as any unusual complication of circumstances took place.'

During the gloomy times that followed, in which the spirit of desolation was let loose to overthrow and to destroy, England shone as a polar star to the benighted nations: and what might have been the fate of England herself, had an immoral and irreligious

¹ Heeren's Manual, vol. ii. p. 164.

prince been seated on her throne, or a weak irresolute minister at her helm? If we consider the qualities demanded by the peculiar difficulties of the period, we shall rarely find an instance of means more providentially adapted to a great end: to stem at its fountain head that torrent of infidelity which was ready to overspread the land, was the glory of the British monarch: to heal the wounds of his bleeding country, replenish her finances, amend her institutions, concentrate her energies, and thus prepare her for that tremendous contest which was about to strain every nerve in the constitution, was the task of Pitt; and nobly did he perform it: when Frederic of Prussia therefore called him, in affected scorn, 'a minister of preparatives,' he unintentionally paid him the highest compliment which a statesman could receive; confessing that he was alive to impending dangers, and ready to avert, by seasonable precaution, those evils, which, if suffered to approach nearer, might have defied resistance.

The British parliament re-assembled on the twenty-third of January; but no subject of importance came on till the twelfth of February, when the house resolved itself into a committee on the commercial treaty with France, resulting from Mr. Pitt's enlarged views respecting the interests of the two countries. Taught by former and by recent connexions between France and Spain, as well as between France and Austria, he felt that past enmity was not an insurmountable bar to permanent reconciliation; and rightly estimating the advantages that would accrue to industrious and skilful nations from an unfettered trade stimulating their respective efforts, he formed his scheme for promoting a more intimate intercourse with the two greatest of European states: the treaty in question established reciprocal liberty of commerce; the subjects of each power being permitted to navigate and resort to the dominions of the other, without any let or hindrance, while they forbore to transgress the laws; and as the prohibitory duties in each kingdom, by enhancing prices, had reciprocally discouraged the

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sale of their principal commodities, these were now modified by a tariff to the satisfaction of both. When this measure came before the house, its object, spirit, and provisions were ably and eloquently enforced by Pitt: 'it was ridiculous,' he said, 'to imagine that the French would consent to yield advantages without any idea of compensation: the treaty would undoubtedly benefit them, but he did not hesitate to say that it would be still more profitable to us: France might gain for her wines and other articles a large and opulent market; but we should procure the same to a much greater extent for our manufactures: both nations were prepared and disposed for such a connexion; France, by the peculiar dispensation of Providence, was gifted, perhaps more than any country on earth, with what made life desirable, in point of soil, climate, and natural productions; Britain, on the contrary, possessing these advantages in a less degree, had, from the happy freedom of its constitution, and the equal security of its laws, risen to a state of great commercial grandeur, and acquired the ability of supplying France with the artificial conveniences of life in return for her natural luxuries.'

Many objections were brought against this measure by the opposition; but that which created most surprise was a declaration of Fox, that, 'as France was the natural and unalterable enemy of England, no sincerity could be expected from her, no interest could eradicate what was rooted in her constitution; so that the proposed intercourse must prove injurious to the national character of England.' In support of his opinion, he declared that no commercial treaty between the two countries had ever been beneficial to Great Britain; on the contrary, that which followed the peace of Utrecht would have become extremely injurious to her: but to this there was a ready answer; that England was then very deficient in those manufactures in which she now excelled; by a free trade, therefore, she must then have been a loser, because she would have given much more than she received: now she would be a gainer, because she would receive

more than she gave. From the idea that any nation could be unalterably the foe of another, Pitt declared that his mind revolted: it had no foundation in experience or history; it was a libel on the constitution of political society; and presupposed the existence of diabolical malignity in the original frame of mankind. He also reminded Fox, that when secretary of state, he himself had recognised the necessity of strengthening the intercourse between the two nations; nay, he had, by an article of the definitive treaty, bound down this country to a commercial treaty with France in the course of two years; and the English ambassador at Paris had, by his direction, taken active steps to accomplish that object.

The only real objection to the present scheme arose from its inconsistency with the celebrated Methuen treaty, concluded between Great Britain and Portugal; by which the duties of Portuguese wines imported into England were to be only two-thirds of those imported from France or any other country: this point, however, was conceded by France during the progress of the measure; the duty on French wines being lowered to that now existing on the wines of Portugal, which latter it became necessary to reduce. The treaty underwent many discussions, calling forth a very creditable exhibition of commercial and political knowledge in both houses: in the commons, several young members eminently distinguished themselves; especially, Mr. Grenville, in support of the treaty; Mr. Grey and Mr. Windham, in opposition to it: among the peers, lords Thurlow and Hawkesbury, Loughborough and Carlisle, exerted their respective abilities on the subject; but the fullest and most detailed reasonings were presented by the marquis of Lansdowne and the bishop of Llandaff.² The former nobleman, though he acknowledged the sound policy of cultivating an amicable intercourse with France, considered that the reciprocity of advantages promised by ministers was ideal; and that Great Britain must

² Dr. Watson. A full report of his very able speech is given in his *Autobiography*, p. 166.

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lose by the stipulations. The learned and ingenious prelate hoped that ministers had secret motives for this treaty beside those which were avowed: he trusted that its framers felt morally certain that the French, in consideration of it, would never more, directly or indirectly, disturb us in our Asiatic possessions; that they would not by underhand negotiation attempt to rob us of every commercial advantage, every political alliance in Europe; and that they would not, secretly or openly, foment dissensions in Ireland: he trusted that our navy would be increased in a higher proportion than that of France, by our becoming the principal carriers of the produce and manufactures of both countries: these, he said, were probably among the primary motives which induced his majesty's ministers to negotiate the treaty: but as to the ostensible ones, he could see only two of any consequence; one was, a hope of continuing the peace by this commercial intercourse; the other, a prospect of augmenting our revenue by extending our trade: on the first point, he declared 'that no man would more rejoice than himself to see the time when peace should result from obedience to the benevolent principles of the Gospel; but, while it was made simply to depend on the selfish prospects of commercial policy, he could have no confidence in its continuance: it would not last a moment after it became the interest, real or apparent, of France to break it.' He then descanted on the hostile spirit of that country, the hypocritical conduct which she exhibited in the early part of our American contest, and the barefaced perfidy with which she broke the peace, when she saw the best opportunity of distressing us and benefiting herself. 'And shall we now,' said he, 'while smarting from the consequences of her treachery, become a second time the easy dupes of her duplicity?' He hoped he did not want, more than others, liberality of sentiment in private life; but liberality of sentiment was a complex idea, the component parts of which, when applied to great nations, he could not unfold: before he could begin to think liberally of France, he must learn to forget America: he

would not part with his prejudices against France, since they were prejudices which had for ages preserved the liberty and independence of his country: he did not say that France was the natural enemy of Great Britain, but he said more; he believed her to be the political enemy of the liberties of every state in Europe; in a word, he could not trust her. 'We are now at peace; both nations are sick of war; there is no need of a commercial treaty to preserve the peace: if there were, it would be inefficacious to that end; since every interest of France, her landed, manufacturing, and commercial interest, will be made to stoop to her ambition: this commercial regulation is an opiate, by which she wishes to lull us into a torpid state of security, before she strikes the blow which she meditates.'

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On the other ostensible motive for the treaty, that of increasing the revenue by extending our trade, his lordship entered at great length, until he exhausted all the arguments which could be urged against it. With regard to the approbation of the scheme expressed by our manufacturers, he asked, how they could reconcile this line of conduct with that which they pursued when the Irish propositions were before parliament? for, to his apprehension, there was scarcely an objection to them, which did not apply with equal or greater force to this treaty: he was a friend to the Irish propositions, though an enemy to the French scheme. Where, then, was his own consistency? clearly in this; that France and Ireland stand in very different relations to us: he was a friend to the Irish propositions, not from a full persuasion that the arrangements held out by them would not in many cases have interfered with the manufacturing interests of Great Britain; but from a conviction that the wealth, strength, and dignity of Ireland would ultimately be the wealth, strength, and dignity of Great Britain: he was an enemy to this treaty, from a full persuasion that it would in many instances interfere with the manufacturing interests of England, and from a conviction that the wealth of France was the poverty of Great Britain; her strength was our weakness, her dignity

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our disgrace. 'Aggrandise Ireland, even at your own risk; still it is the empire which is made rich and powerful: aggrandise France, at the risk of your disadvantage; and you accelerate the ruin of the empire.' He went on to argue, that it was chiefly by our machinery that British manufacturers were enabled to baffle competition in foreign markets, against every disadvantage of the high price of labor, high taxes, and other contingent burdens; and in proportion as our machinery was copied or exported into foreign countries, our exports of manufactures to those countries would decrease: hence the law prohibiting the exportation of machinery: but he had it from the best authority, that a model of every tool used in our manufactories was open to inspection at Paris: as France, therefore, possessed our machinery, the conclusion was, that she would not take our manufactures.

'The value of our iron exports was a tenth, or, according to other calculations, a ninth part of that arising from all our other exports; yet in this manufacture of iron the French were making immense exertions: but it might perhaps be said, that in our coal we should always possess a decided advantage; yet even here we had cause for alarm: there was no doubt that coal existed as plentifully in France as in England:' his lordship referred to published authority for its existence in almost every province of that kingdom; and for its use in the various fabrics established throughout Normandy, Burgundy, and Languedoc: he had been told that it was pyritous and slaty: but it was not all so; and this was a fault which would mend as they dug deeper: in the mean time they would increase their importation of it from this kingdom. He traced the excellence of their manufactures in various other articles, as glass, linens, woollens, &c.; and observed, it was a mistake to suppose that the French people wanted ingenuity or industry: the peculiar misfortune of this treaty was, that we could know nothing of it but from experiment; and in making the experiment, we might be undone.

'Yet there was a disadvantage in it which could

not be called speculative,—the loss which the revenue would sustain by a diminution of the duty on wines; and if this should be made up by increased consumption, £500,000 of our money, or of our manufactures, must be sent to pay for that article: but he thought the French were much more likely to take our money; which he would rather see lent to any other nation.

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‘In favor of the treaty, it had been said, that as France is supposed to contain 24,000,000 of people, and England only 8,000,000, this would open a market greatly in our favor: but to give this argument any weight, it must be shown that these 24,000,000 had as much occasion for our commodities as we had for theirs, and as much money to lay out in purchasing them; that they would as surely clothe themselves in our woollens and cottons, as we should drink their wines and brandy. It had also been said that our resources would be so increased by an extension of commerce, that in case of any future rupture, we should be more than ever able to contend with France; but this argument was of no importance, unless it could be shown that her resources would not be increased in so high a rate as ours; which had not been, and perhaps could not be shown. But the greatest injury we should sustain would arise from our inciting France to become a manufacturing country, by opening to her our home market, the richest in Europe; by seconding her intentions to create industry and ingenuity among her people; and, above all, by giving her every opportunity to acquire that manufacturing skill, in which we at present surpassed her and all the world. His judgment, therefore, was full, clear, and decided against the treaty.’

In all the divisions, however, on this subject in the commons, Mr. Pitt prevailed by large majorities; and the lords having also given their sanction to the measure, both houses, on the 8th of March, presented a joint address of thanks to his majesty, for concluding a treaty calculated to promote beneficial intercourse between the two countries, as well as permanent blessings of peace. This address was moved in the com-

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mons by Mr. Blackburne, member for Lancashire; and seconded by captain Berkley, member for Gloucestershire; both of whom, as well as several representatives of great commercial towns, declared that the treaty was highly approved by their constituents. Captain Berkeley added, that the approbation of the inhabitants of Gloucestershire must be more valuable, as they had been very adverse to Mr. Pitt when he entered into office; but they now felt convinced of his spotless integrity; and confessed that he was heir to his father's eminent virtues and talents, having no other object in view but the public good.

Mr. Pitt's
plan of
financial
reform.

These marks of approbation encouraged the minister to proceed with his grand scheme of financial reform; and his next measure was a consolidation of duties in three great branches of revenue, the customs, the excise, and the stamps; a subject intimately connected with our national debt, for the interest on which those duties were the main security. The principles adopted by our ancestors, as suited to the narrow limits of public exigences and receipts in their times, were no longer applicable to the present enlarged scale of commerce and revenue: additions to the duties of the customs had become so numerous and complicated, that the several branches, which the officers were obliged to keep distinct, amounted to sixty-eight; and there were articles subjected to fourteen separate imposts, extremely difficult of calculation, from the minute fractions in most of them: even so trifling a commodity as a pound of nutmegs paid nine different duties:³ so intricate and involved was the whole system, that merchants were driven to the necessity of relying on the officers; who, instead of being, as they were intended, a check on the former, became their agents. The manner also in which the value of articles was estimated, led to great errors and fraud; while similar inconveniences, though to a less extent, pervaded the departments of excise and stamps. Intentions of remedying these evils had often been expressed under different administrations; but when they came

³ Tomline, vol. ii. p. 236.

to be examined, so many difficulties presented themselves, and a prospect of so much labor appeared, that no one had ventured to engage in the enterprise, by taking even one preparatory step: it remained, therefore, for the present minister to ascertain, whether these difficulties were insuperable or not.

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After an extensive investigation, and repeated conferences with intelligent persons, he submitted a plan to the house, on the twenty-sixth of February, in which he proposed, that all existing duties should be abolished; one single duty on each article being substituted in their stead, amounting as near as possible in value to the former; and in this equalisation, fractions were to be changed into the integral numbers next above them; by which operation alone the revenue would gain about £20,000 per annum: he proposed also, that in place of distinct funds, the produce of all taxes and duties should form a general one, to be called the consolidated fund, out of which public creditors of every description were to be paid; the surplus being applicable, under the direction of parliament, to the services of the current year: any deficiency to be made good out of the supplies; so that the only objection which could arise on the score of public faith, would be thus obviated. As many of the subsidies were appropriated to certain annuitants, some of whom were intitled to priority of payment, it was proposed to maintain this right, by making the first payments out of the general fund to such annuitants as were intitled to that priority; and for this arrangement Mr. Pitt thought it right to procure the consent of all holders of stock, the interest of which was charged on appropriated duties; who, if they did not signify their dissent before the first of June following, were to be considered as consenting to the plan. Other regulations of a very beneficial kind were attached to this general scheme: to prevent a multiplicity of oaths at the custom-house, the importer was merely required to state the value of his articles; but if the officer suspected fraud, he might take the goods for the public, at the price of ten per cent. above the

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value specified; and to secure his vigilance, he was to retain a moiety of any sum for which the said goods might be sold, above the declared value and the ten per cent. Money arising from life annuities, not claimed for three years, was to be paid over to the commissioners for a reduction of the national debt; and money arising from casual or unappropriated revenue, which formerly lay dormant till specially voted for the public service, was to be carried from time to time to the consolidated fund: and, as in former administrations, when taxes were imposed to pay the interest of loans, it was scarcely ever known whether the produce was equal to the charge incurred, Mr. Pitt provided that there should be laid annually before parliament, an account of all future additions to the yearly charge of the public debt, by the interest of any loan negotiated within ten years; also an account of the produce in the preceding year of duties imposed, or additions made to the revenue, for the purpose of defraying any charge occasioned by such loans respectively.⁴

He next proposed that accounts should be regularly kept of the produce of those duties, which although comprised in the hereditary property of the crown, formed part of the public income during the king's life, in consequence of the grant of the civil list. After explaining these provisions as the general outline of a plan, in the detail of which 3000 resolutions were involved, and of which he pledged himself that no important one should pass without the attention of the house being called to it, he determined to leave the subject for private consideration; contenting himself at present with moving a general preliminary resolution, 'that all duties of customs, excise, and stamps do cease and determine, and that other duties be substituted in their stead.' When he had ceased speaking, Mr. Burke, and other gentlemen on the opposition side of the house, rose to signify their high approbation of the measure, as well as of the extraordinary clearness and perspicuity with which it had

⁴ Tomline, vol. ii. p. 242.

been unfolded: Mr. Thornton, an eminent merchant, and member for Hull, asserted on the authority of many intelligent persons connected with the customs, that it would be an essential accommodation to all commercial men; in which opinion Fox coincided, at the same time candidly declaring, that the objection which he had entertained, respecting the appropriated funds and public creditors, was intirely met by the provisions on that head.

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As some of the duties to be imposed in consequence of the commercial treaty with France varied from the general rates, Mr. Pitt proposed a separate schedule for them at the end of the act, that there might be only one law for reference in all cases: this was objected to, as a design to keep that treaty out of sight; but was ultimately carried. The mover of this important bill, in the different stages of its progress, explained all its parts to the intire satisfaction of the house; and it passed without the slightest objection being made to the consolidated duties; nor did a single stockholder, who had a right to priority of payment, refuse his consent.

On the twentieth of April, the chancellor of the exchequer opened his budget; informing the house that the state of the revenue would enable him to provide for all services of the current year, and apply the stated surplus to a sinking fund, without the necessity of any loan or new tax; even though it had been found impracticable to reduce our army and navy to the peace establishment; and though last year's revenue had been much impaired by a suspension of trade during the arrangement of the commercial treaties, as well as by deficient crops in the West Indies. Fox and Sheridan were unwilling to admit that our finances were in so prosperous a condition as they had been represented; and after specifying certain supposed errors and fallacies, they called on Mr. Pitt to supply the alleged deficiency by an imposition of new taxes: he however defended his own estimates; contending that it was his duty to render by every possible means the taxes already

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established more productive, rather than increase the public burdens. In making this observation, he seems to have had in view a measure, which he soon afterwards proposed, for enabling the board of treasury to divide the country into districts, and to farm the duty on post-horses, the greater part of which was now lost to the exchequer, by collusion between innkeepers and collectors: to make it certain, however, that the revenue would not suffer by this experiment, he proposed to put up the tax for each district at the highest point it had ever reached. An objection was made to this scheme; that its principle was repugnant, not only to the general system of finance, but to the constitution of the country; and that it might lead to oppression like that exercised in France, where the taxes were generally farmed: Mr. Pitt, however, defended it by the analogy of turnpike tolls, and cross posts; while he showed that the oppression alluded to, arose, not from the system of farming the revenue, but from an arbitrary form of government, which naturally led to oppressive modes of collection: though the bill was strenuously opposed by the commons in almost every stage, it was finally carried, and passed the upper house without a division.

Debates on
the corpo-
ration and
test act.

Such were the leading features of the great financial scheme introduced by the premier during this session; but there were several important subjects brought forward by other members, in the discussion of which he took a leading part: the first of these deserving notice, was a proposition to repeal the corporation and test acts, as far as they related to protestant dissenters. In the late struggle between Pitt and Fox, and the general election which ensued, that body of men had warmly espoused the ministerial side, and thought the present a favorable opportunity of seeking relief from those disabilities of which they had long complained; neither had their leaders been wanting in attempts to predispose the public in their favor; for among them were many aspiring men of genius and learning, naturally anxious to obtain equal privileges with those to whose intellectual superiority they were not inclined

to bow : such authors, therefore, as Drs. Price and Priestley, furnished materials ; which, being dilated and disseminated by others, inclined many persons to question the justice of that policy, which restricted eligibility to office by a religious test : when it was found that such representations had produced an effect, delegates were appointed to arrange a plan ; but these did not petition parliament until they had circulated a paper, intitled ‘ the case of protestant dissenters with reference to the corporation and test acts : ’ exhibiting their history, and dilating on the hardships to which conscientious dissenters were exposed by such severe restrictions : after this, they engaged Mr. Beaufoy, a gentleman of great respectability, and a friend of the minister, to move for a committee of the whole house to take into consideration these acts, the origin of which he explained in his introductory speech. ‘ The corporation act declared that no person should be elected into any municipal office, who had not, within one year before his election, taken the sacrament according to the usage of the church of England : the test act required every person accepting a civil or military office under the crown, to receive the sacrament in like manner within a limited time ; in default of which, he was liable to a fine of £500, as well as other severe penalties. The first of these enactments passed in the year 1661 ; and the arbitrary spirit in which it was framed sufficiently appeared from a single clause, empowering the king, for a limited time, to remove at pleasure all municipal officers by commissioners of his appointment : it was levelled indiscriminately against protestant and catholic dissenters ; but in the year 1673 the state of things became altered : the jealousy of parliament, in regard to protestant dissenters, had subsided ; while protestants of all denominations were alarmed at the dangers to which they were equally exposed by the attempts of the court to restore the rites of the Romish church. The king himself was believed, on good grounds, to be a concealed papist ; the duke of York, his immediate successor, was a declared and furious one ; lord Clifford,

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the chief minister, with many other persons in authority, were also bigoted catholics; and a declaration of indulgence had been published by his majesty, in order to pave the way for the introduction of popery: under these circumstances, the test act was a measure of national policy and safety: it bore the title of 'an act for preventing the danger which may happen from popish recusants;' and the dissenters, far from joining the opposition to it made by the court, publicly declared, through the medium of alderman Love, one of the members for the city of London, 'that in a time of national danger they would in no wise impede a measure deemed essential to the public safety; and though they were accidentally included in its operation, they would waive their claim to exemption, relying on the good faith, justice, and humanity of parliament, that provision should be made hereafter for their relief.' This seasonable declaration greatly facilitated the passing of the bill, and was received with just and general applause: an act for their relief was at a later period of the session passed by the lower house, but defeated by a sudden prorogation: a second was introduced in a succeeding parliament, and passed both houses; but while it lay ready for the royal assent, the king acted the disgraceful part of secretly ordering the clerk of the crown to withdraw the bill; and parliament being soon afterwards dissolved, it never became a law. That relief, however, which the unprincipled conduct of Charles defeated, the magnanimity of William was impatient to bestow: in one of his earliest speeches from the throne, he expressed an earnest hope, 'that such alteration might be made in the law, as would leave room for the admission of all his protestant subjects who were willing to serve him:' but the high church and tory interest predominated over the wise policy of the court: nevertheless, from the memorable protest of the lords on this subject in the year 1689, it appeared that several of the greatest men of that period coincided in opinion with their sovereign; and on another occasion still later, when a conference took place be-

tween the two houses respecting the bill of occasional conformity, the peers in general emphatically expressed their abhorrence of the injustice of the test act.' With regard to the general policy of this law, Mr. Beaufoy observed, 'that to the higher trust of legislative authority the dissenters were admitted without reserve: from the members of neither house of parliament was a religious test exacted; whence the absurdity of the imposition might be well inferred: he had indeed heard of an idle opinion, that there was something of a republican tendency, of an anti-monarchical bias, in the presbyterian church; but from so vague an assertion he appealed to experience; and asked, whether the Scotch were suspected of an indifference to monarchy? With a predilection indeed for measures favorable to arbitrary power, he had heard them taxed; but never with levelling principles, or republican sentiments. English dissenters, since the revolution which had first given to this kingdom a constitution, had uniformly acted on principles most beneficial to it; having constantly proved themselves zealous supporters of that monarchical system which was by law established: would then a repeal of the test act prove injurious to the church? God forbid! the suggested repeal was no attack on the rights of others; it was merely the completion of a wise system of toleration adopted at the revolution. The church of England flourished long before the test act existed: in Scotland no such law ever had a being: had Scotland then no established church? In Ireland, the relief now solicited had been granted seven years ago; but was the church of Ireland therefore destroyed? In Holland, Russia, Prussia, and Hanover, no traces of such a test were to be discovered: in the territories of the emperor all disqualifications of this nature had been recently abolished. In France a similar relief was granted by the edict of Nantz, from the revocation of which that country had severely suffered; and which was now, according to report, about to be restored. In fact,' Mr. Beaufoy added, 'the repeal of the test, so far from being pernicious to our

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established church, would be favorable to its prosperity. The different classes of dissenters had no general interest, no bond of union, except an ignominious exclusion from public offices common to them all. Were he further asked,—If justice be the principle on which you decide, shall not the catholics enjoy the common privileges of citizenship? he would answer without hesitation;—If the catholics could give a sufficient pledge of loyalty to their sovereign, and attachment to the laws,—questions not at this time before the house,—he should think they ought to be admitted to the civil and military services of the state.' Such were the liberal and politic views of this speaker, who concluded his address by enumerating other considerations in favor of repeal, drawn from the gross profanation to which the present test subjected the most sacred and solemn of all christian rites. Mr. Beaufoy declared 'that he should have thought it not unbecoming the sanctity of our bishops to have solicited the removal of so great a scandal from the church:⁵ but let the requisition come from whatever quarter it might, sure he was, that a compliance with it would reflect honor on the house; for whatever tended to debase religion, must diminish political authority, and weaken all the sanctions of civil and social order.'

Lord North, true to his original principles, rose with zeal to oppose what appeared to him a dangerous attempt at innovation. Declaring himself friendly to toleration in its full extent, he conjured the house to reflect, that the present motion involved, not merely toleration, but the repeal of an act which was the great bulwark of our constitution, and to which we owed the inestimable blessings of freedom. The exclusion of dissenters from civil offices inflicted on them no injury,

⁵ Bishop Watson, in his Memoirs, relates, that a meeting of the bench was convened on this subject, on a summons from the archbishop of Canterbury, and at the instance of Mr. Pitt. The question proposed was put thus :—Ought the corporation and test acts to be maintained? 'I was the junior bishop,' he observes; 'and as such, was called on to deliver my opinion first; which I did in the negative. The only prelate who voted with me was bishop Shipley. The then archbishops of Canterbury and York, the bishops of Worcester, Lincoln, Ely, Peterborough, Norwich, Exeter, Bangor, Bath and Wells, Rochester, and Lichfield, voted that the acts ought to be maintained.'

no disgrace: the test act was merely a civil and political regulation; and the arguments against it were equally applicable to every restriction which the wisdom of government in all countries had found necessary. He dwelt on the alarm felt by the clergy at this attempt; and added, that all knew the pernicious nature of a cry, that 'the church is in danger.' No complaints existed of ecclesiastical tyranny; and universal toleration was firmly established: let the house, therefore, be on its guard against innovation in the church; and confound not the toleration of religious opinions with modes of admission to civil and military appointments. The premier enforced the arguments of lord North with still more ability and address: he declared, in flattering and explicit terms, the esteem and regard which he felt for the collective body of protestant dissenters, who had ever approved themselves genuine and zealous friends of constitutional liberty: of this their conduct during the late political conflicts had displayed a memorable proof; and he acknowledged with gratitude and pleasure the honorable and unanimous support which he had received from them at that interesting and momentous crisis: but he must, however reluctantly, discharge what he conceived to be an indispensable duty, in opposing the present application. It had been said, if you grant this repeal, the same persons will soon come to ask for something more; but such an argument had no weight with him: he would not object to concede what he ought, because he might be asked to concede what he ought not: a distinction, however, was, in his opinion, necessary to be made between political and civil liberty: the latter was already enjoyed by dissenters in its full extent; the former was in fact nothing else than a distribution of power, which must be regulated by the discretion of the state: its employments and offices are not the property of individuals; they are public trusts, to be confided to those who are politically competent to occupy them. The dissenters desire a participation in them as a matter of right and justice: if this were granted, they might acquire a

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dangerous ascendancy in corporations; and an exclusive corporation interest in the hands of dissenters was a very different thing from the liberty of sitting in that house, on the free choice of the general mass of electors: it was now indeed asserted that they had no such object in contemplation; but it was necessary to take into account the real motives by which human affairs were regulated, and not depend on the security of words against the tenor and tendency of actions. Highly as he esteemed many of the present dissenters, there were some among them who would not admit that any ecclesiastical establishment was necessary: against such it behoved the legislature to be on its guard: while they enjoyed perfect freedom to serve God according to their consciences, the apprehension and fears of another class of men, equally respectable and much more numerous, were not to be disregarded. It was impossible to separate the ecclesiastical and political liberties of this country; the church and state were united on principles of mutual expediency, and by indissoluble ties; wherefore it concerned those, to whom the care of the state was entrusted, to be cautious lest they rashly endangered the church; the ruin of which must involve that of the state.

Mr. Beaufoy's motion was powerfully supported by Fox; who declared, 'that whatever personal reasons he might have to complain of the recent conduct of dissenters, he would never lose sight of those great principles of civil and religious liberty, on which the present application was founded. He had considered himself honored by acting with them on many former occasions; and he acknowledged the general tenor of their political conduct to be in the highest degree meritorious: in his opinion, it was very unwise in any case to take religion for a test in politics; and he averred, that the maxims advanced by Mr. Pitt showed, that although he declined persecution in words, he admitted the whole extent of it in principle.' On a division, after long debates, the motion was rejected by 178 votes against 100.

If the ministerial opposition to this measure be taken

into account, the division was not discouraging: but the dissenters were greatly mortified at the line of conduct adopted by Mr. Pitt; for it was generally supposed that at least he would not have discountenanced their efforts: they saw that he stood in a different situation from that of his great predecessor, sir Robert Walpole, under whose administration the measure of repeal was last brought forward; but they did not make sufficient allowance for his peculiar circumstances. In the turbulent times of Walpole, the popular voice was so inimical to their claims, that the minister, though personally favorable to them, did not dare to take on himself the responsibility of an advocate: in the present instance, it is true, the application of the dissenters was not so opposed to the general sense of the public or of parliament, but that a slight degree of countenance from the court would have sufficed to ensure its success: in that quarter, however, conscientious, and therefore insuperable, hostility existed; so that a determination in Mr. Pitt to force the measure through parliament would undoubtedly have led to his dismissal; and whether such an event would have been desirable at this period, when so many important interests were involved in his administration, can hardly be a matter of doubt.

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From this subject the attention of the house was soon called to the painful state of embarrassment in which the heir apparent was involved. Though the prince had now lived in comparative privacy about nine months, little progress had been made in the diminution of his debts, on account of their large amount and accruing interest: under these circumstances, he was persuaded by his friends to permit an application to be made to parliament; and on the twentieth of April, Mr. alderman Newnham rose to ask the minister whether he intended to bring forward any proposition for extricating his royal highness from so embarrassing a situation. Having received an answer in the negative, he gave notice, that on the fourth of May he would himself introduce the subject, by a motion for an address to his majesty, praying

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him to take the prince's situation into consideration; and to grant such relief as in his royal wisdom he might think fit; at the same time pledging the house to make good the same. An interesting conversation followed this announcement, in which the worthy alderman was earnestly entreated by the minister, as well as by several other members, to withdraw his motion, as being pregnant with inconvenience and mischief. Mr. Pitt said, 'that by the perseverance of Mr. Newnham, he should be driven to disclose affairs which it would otherwise be his duty to conceal;' and Mr. Rolle, member for Devonshire, declared 'that the question involved circumstances essentially affecting the constitution both in church and state.' These inuendos evidently alluded to the report of a private marriage celebrated between the prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert; and there was a doubt in the minds of many whether the act passed in the twelfth of George III. would have exempted him from the penalty incurred by so imprudent a step;—a penalty no less than exclusion from the throne of this realm:⁶ for although that would have nullified the alleged contract; yet there are analogous cases in law, where the nullity of an illegal transaction does not cancel the penalty attached to it. Fox, Sheridan, and other gentlemen in the prince's confidence declared, that 'there was nothing which his royal highness less feared than a full and impartial investigation of his conduct; and nothing which he more deprecated, than a studied ambiguity or affected tenderness, under the pretence of respect or indulgence.' Mr. Rolle was in vain called on to explain the extraordinary language which he had used; and when the subject was afterwards resumed, Fox referred it to a malicious calumny, which had been propagated without doors by the enemies of the prince, to depreciate his character, and injure him in the esteem of his country. Mr. Rolle then thought proper to acknowledge that his allusions had a reference to this subject; which produced a

⁶ 'Every person,' says the bill of rights, 'who shall marry a papist, shall be excluded, and for ever be incapable of inheriting the crown of this realm.'

contradiction of the report by Mr. Fox in the most unqualified language: and in answer to an observation, that although such a marriage could not take place under legal sanction, there were ways in which the law might, in the minds of some persons, have been satisfactorily evaded; he replied, that 'it not only could never have taken place legally, but it never occurred in any way whatever; and had been from the beginning a base and malicious falsehood.'

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In consequence of this explicit declaration, Mr. Rolle was repeatedly called on to express himself as satisfied; but from apparent distrust, he declined saying anything farther, than 'that the house would judge for themselves on what had passed.' As far as public opinion was concerned, he was justified in retaining his doubts; and to increase the perplexity of this mysterious business, it was reported and believed, that a temporary coolness had taken place between the prince and Fox, in consequence of that indignation, which had inadvertently carried the latter beyond the strict limits of his commission: the minister, however, had no farther pretext for refusing the relief which the prince's situation required: an interview between them took place at Carlton-house, in consequence of which the intended motion was withdrawn; and a message from the crown on the subject of his royal highness's debts was followed by an addition to his annual income of £10,000 out of the civil list; an issue of £161,000 from the same source for the payment of his debts; and £20,000 on account of the works at Carlton-house.

The proceedings against Warren Hastings were resumed at an early period of this session, and continued to the end of it, with intervals occasioned by the pressure of important business. The grand question of impeachment, owing to the secret inclinations of the court, and the undetermined conduct of the minister, still remained doubtful; when Sheridan, on the seventh of February, opened the fourth charge, respecting the treatment of the princesses of Oude, in a speech, the surpassing eloquence of which proved

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decisive in its consequences. The substance of this charge has been already recorded in the narrative of Indian transactions, but of the brilliant speech by which it was supported, imperfect records only remain; so that it is difficult to give even a faint idea of that excellence, which was honored by the most rapturous applause ever elicited from a British senate. 'The conduct of Mr. Hastings,' said the orator, 'respecting the nabob and begums of Oude, comprehends in it every species of human offence: he has been guilty of rapacity at once violent and insatiable, of treachery cool and premeditated, of oppression unprovoked, of barbarity wanton and unmanly. So long since as the year 1775, the begum princess, widow of Sujah u Dowla, wrote to Mr. Hastings in the following moving terms:—' If it be your pleasure, that the mother of the late nabob, that myself, his other women, and his infant children should be reduced to a state of dishonor and distress, we must submit: but if, on the contrary, you call to mind the friendship of the late blessed nabob, you will exert yourself effectually in favor of us who are helpless:' but inflamed by disappointment at Benares, he hastened to the fortress of Chunar, to put in execution the atrocious design of instigating the nabob, son of this princess, to matricide and plunder. No sooner had Mr. Hastings determined to invade the substance of justice, than he resolved to avail himself of her judicial forms, and despatched a messenger for the chief justice of India⁷ to assist him in perpetrating the violence which he meditated: without a moment's pause, or the shadow of process instituted, sentence was pronounced; and thus, at the same time when the sword of government was converted to an assassin's dagger, the pure ermine of justice was stained and soiled with the basest contamination: it was clear to demonstration, that the begums were not concerned in the insurrection of Benares: no, their treasures were their treason. If,' said the eloquent speaker, 'the mind of Mr. Hastings were susceptible of superstition, he might imagine the

⁷ Sir Elijah Impey.

proud spirit of Sujah u Dowla looking down on the ruin and devastation of his family; beholding the palace which he had adorned with the spoils of the devoted Rohillas plundered by his base and perfidious ally; and viewing the man, whom on his death-bed he had constituted guardian of his wife, his mother, and his family, forcibly exposing those dear relations, the objects of his solemn trust, to the rigor of merciless seasons, or the violence of the more merciless soldiery. Such were the awful dispensations of retributive justice! It was not given to the house to witness the tremulous joy of millions, whom the vote of this night would save from the cruelty of corrupted power: but the blessings of a people, thus delivered, would not be dissipated in empty air: no; they would lift up their prayers to Heaven in gratitude to the power, which, by stretching its mighty arm across the deep, had saved them from ruin and destruction.' When Mr. Sheridan had finished speaking, many members acknowledged that their sentiments had been changed by the facts adduced, and the cogent reasoning with which they had been accompanied; so that an adjournment was moved, to afford time for a dispassionate consideration of the question, when the minds of the committee should be relieved from the impression of such fascinating eloquence: this unprecedented proposal was strongly opposed by Fox; but Pitt contending that many circumstances had been brought forward in this powerful harangue, which required reference and investigation, the motion was carried without a division. Next day, major Scott entered into a long and elaborate defence of the governor; after which, Mr. Pitt observed, that as he had ever thought this charge bore the strongest marks of cruelty and criminality, so he had been peculiarly careful to guard against prejudice, and to keep his mind open for the reception of whatever might tend to produce a right judgment, either in the establishment of innocence, or the conviction of guilt: he was glad therefore that the debate had been adjourned, as he was now prepared to deliver his sentiments with much

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greater satisfaction to himself than he could have done the preceding evening. After coolly weighing the arguments which came with such irresistible force from the honorable gentleman who advanced the charge, and inquiring into some transactions which had been placed in a new point of view, the minister declared that he should give his decided assent to the motion: he appeared thoroughly penetrated with a conviction of the atrocity of the facts adduced, as well as with the strength of the evidence by which they were supported: he considered Mr. Hastings's conduct as utterly unjustifiable, in authorising the resumption of the jaghires, and seizure of the treasures of the begums; observing, that these crimes were highly aggravated by his making a son the instrument of robbing his mother, and by refusing to revise his proceedings in obedience to the orders of the directors. Mr. Sheridan expressed himself highly gratified by the approbation of a minister who had shown himself able to lay aside party feelings, by coming forward in defence of the honor and character, not only of that house, but of the whole nation: with regard to the imputation of undue severity towards Mr. Hastings, with which he had been charged; he declared, that he was incapable of harboring malignant feelings against that gentleman, or any other person. Such was the enthusiastic spirit excited in the house, that this motion was carried by 175 votes against 68.

On the second of March, Mr. Pelham opened the charge relative to the nabob of Ferruckabad; accusing the governor of withdrawing his protection from him for a present of £100,000 from the vizir of Oude; and of being the primary cause of that cruel oppression which the nabob for many years had suffered from the vizir, under whom he held his dominions. On this occasion, lord Hood argued strenuously in favor of the accused, on the ground that great allowance ought to be made for persons placed in high and responsible situations; who frequently found themselves compelled to act in a manner not strictly consonant with the rules of equity and justice: he also considered Mr.

Hastings's eminent services and merit as greatly outweighing his errors and delinquencies; and he feared lest any censure or punishment of him might operate as a check on the exertions of future governors and commanders. His lordship referred to his own conduct in the West Indies, when the fleet under his command was in extreme distress from want of bread, and he obtained a supply by resorting to means which the law did not authorise.

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Mr. Pitt intended to have given a silent vote on this occasion, but could not suffer the sentiments uttered by the last speaker to pass without notice. After complimenting the noble lord on the purity of his character and conduct, he cautioned the house against allowing it to interfere with the situation of that unfortunate person (for so he would call him), who was the subject of their debate. The noble lord had argued generally in favor of those, who being entrusted with the great interests of their country, were sometimes reduced to the necessity of sacrificing those interests, or of violating the direct rules of private justice: such situations were likely to occur, and were much to be lamented; while it was natural for the noble lord, whose intentions were always fair and upright, and who was conscious that he had suffered no necessity to operate on himself beyond what the case rendered indispensable, to resort to such a supposition in excuse of Mr. Hastings: but was the conduct of this gentleman, now before the house, correspondent to such principles? Was the crime that day alleged against him justified by necessity; or was it of such a size and complexion as any necessity could justify? Where a departure was made from justice and equity, it was not sufficient to say, that such a step was necessary; it was incumbent on the party accused to point out and prove the necessity, as well as the consequences likely to flow from a too rigid observance of strict justice; in order that a comparison might be made between the object to be gained and the sacrifice to be made, and a judgment of censure or approbation be founded on the result of such com-

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parison: but in this instance no state necessity whatever was attempted to be shown; and therefore no ground existed for those, who saw a criminal tendency in the transaction, to refuse their consent to the motion.

With regard to the general merits of Mr. Hastings, there had been a period, he confessed, in which such an argument might have been urged with some effect: at the commencement of the inquiry, the house might have weighed his crimes against his virtues, and considered whether the latter were of sufficient excellence to counterbalance the former: but such a consideration could not with any propriety be entertained after the inquiry had once been instituted: the committee were not then required to determine, on a general view of facts, the general merits or demerits of the person accused; but on the investigation of a particular transaction, the criminality or innocence of that single transaction. Besides, Mr. Hastings himself had disclaimed any benefit which might have been expected from a general view of his services: he desired to stand or fall by the result of an investigation extended to each particular charge; and it would be highly unjust towards him to depart from the line in which he chose to have his conduct considered: still he admitted, that there remained a stage, in which the merits of that gentleman might and ought to be weighed against his failings; and that was, when, in case of conviction on the charges laid against him, he came to receive sentence: with respect to the particular charge under discussion, which had been already so ably handled, he would only say, that Mr. Hastings had, from his own words, clearly convicted himself of criminality.

He then read a part of the governor's correspondence; where, speaking of the recall of Mr. Shee from Ferruckabad, he acknowledged, 'that by so doing he must give up the nabob Muzuffir Jung to the oppression of the vizir.' Besides, what could excuse his acceptance of so large a present as he had received from the latter potentate? Could this be excused by any degree of necessity? Was there a fleet in want of

necessary supplies, or an army waiting for subsistence? or did any branch of the public service render so extraordinary a resource requisite? No: it could be justified by no necessity; it could be accounted for by no principle but that of corruption. Mr. Pitt then very successfully showed that no evil, but rather an advantage, would occur to the service of the country by this example of parliament, in the prosecution of a great delinquent; and the motion was carried by a majority of 112 against 50.

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Sir James Erskine opened the charges relative to contracts and salaries, on the fifteenth of March, in a speech which comprehended a great variety of matter; accusing Mr. Hastings of profuse and corrupt conduct, in direct opposition to the most positive orders of the directors; and this question was carried by sixty-six to twenty-six. The affair relative to Fyzoola Khan was brought forward by Mr. Windham: Mr. Pitt, though he did not speak in the debate, coincided in sentiment with Mr. Dundas, who expressed a strong opinion of the governor's criminal conduct; and the charge was confirmed by a majority of ninety-six to thirty-seven. On the second of April, Sheridan introduced the subject of presents, and accused Mr. Hastings of directly violating the regulating act of 1773. 'In every part of his conduct,' he exclaimed, 'the late governor-general exhibited proofs of a wild, eccentric, and irregular mind; in pride, in passion, in all things changeable, except in corruption: his revenge was a tempest, a tornado, involving all within its influence in one common destruction: but his corruption was regular and systematic; a monsoon, blowing uniformly from one point of the compass, and wafting the wealth of India to the same port, in one certain direction.' On this occasion, even lord Mulgrave and Mr. William Grenville spoke very strongly against the accused, and condemned his conduct as highly criminal: the latter observed, 'that Mr. Hastings had not merely accepted presents, but had extorted money for his own private use; and he wished to carry before the august tribunal of the lords a man who had dared

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to sully the lustre of the British name, and to trample on the sacred inheritance of an unoffending race.' the charge, indeed, was so clearly proved, that major Scott himself could not deny the facts, but merely attempted to clear his friend by a declaration, that he had misunderstood the act of 1773, and had applied the money to the benefit of the company. Many members, who had voted for Mr. Hastings on the other charges, withdrew their support from him on this; and the question was carried by a majority of 165 votes against 54.

Though two charges still remained for discussion, it was now proposed, according to what had been settled on the twenty-second of last month, that a report of resolutions already passed should be immediately made to the house. Before this report, however, was read, Pitt manifested great anxiety that in so important an affair such a method should be adopted as might leave him and other members at liberty to deliver their sentiments, and give their votes freely on the grand and decisive question of impeachment: for, having in some of the charges acquiesced only to a certain extent in the degree of guilt imputed to the accused, he could not justify himself in agreeing to a general vote of impeachment, which might seem to countenance the whole of the several charges as they now stood: having suggested, therefore, as the best mode of proceeding, that these charges should be referred to a committee, who might select the criminal matter out of them, and frame it into articles of impeachment, he waited for information on this point from the authors of the prosecution.

Fox objected to this suggestion; contending that it would be better to agree to the report now under consideration, and immediately send word to the upper house that the commons had resolved to impeach Mr. Hastings; pledging themselves to present articles with all convenient despatch, and reserving to themselves the constitutional right of supplying more: Burke, however, having heard the minister's reply, consented to adopt his suggestion: the report was then read, and

an order unanimously made, that it should be taken into consideration next day, when the several resolutions, including nine of the original charges, were agreed to without a division; and on the same day a committee was appointed to prepare articles of impeachment grounded on those resolutions.

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On the nineteenth of April, Mr. Francis opened the charge relative to the Bengal revenues, accusing the governor of a systematic and flagitious abuse of his powers; when, although Pitt in this instance supported the cause of the accused, the motion was carried by seventy-one votes against fifty-five. On the twenty-fifth, Mr. Burke, as chairman of the committee, presented six articles of impeachment; and on the ninth of May moved that the house should agree to the report; when a long debate ensued, in which Mr. Pitt, after concisely recapitulating the principal charges against the governor-general, declared that it was impossible for him to vote against the motion. Though he considered the whole of the charges as highly exaggerated in some parts, and as not well founded in others; yet in all of them were instances of the most flagrant acts of injustice, oppression, and peculation; acts which never could be vindicated but on the plea of necessity: yet no necessity had been shown; nor was it possible that necessity itself could excuse such actions, accompanied by such circumstances. In answer to Mr. Nathaniel Smith, chairman of the East India company, who had endeavored to vindicate the governor, on the ground that he was not the person who first began the interference of the company with native princes, or who established that influence which it had obtained in their politics, Pitt observed, 'that to whomsoever such influence might be originally attributed, Mr. Hastings was answerable for the management of it, as long as it was in his hands; and to excuse him on this plea would be to justify tyranny by power; for, though the influence of the company had given him power to oppress the country, it had not imposed on him the necessity of so doing.' He concluded a speech replete with dignified and manly

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sentiments, by declaring, 'that the house could not otherwise consult its own honor, its duty to the country, and the ends of public justice, but by sending up an impeachment to the lords:' the motion was accordingly carried by a majority of 175 to 89; and on the tenth of May, Mr. Burke, in the name of the commons, repaired to the bar of the upper house, and impeached Mr. Hastings of high crimes and misdemeanors; at the same time acquainting their lordships, that the commons would with all convenient speed exhibit articles against him, and make good the same. On the fourteenth of May, Burke brought forward the last charge, in which he accused the governor of being the cause of all the distresses which had afflicted the province of Oude; and this motion was carried unanimously, with scarcely any debate. On the twenty-first, Mr. Hastings was taken into custody by the serjeant-at-arms, who delivered him to the usher of the black rod; but, on the motion of the lord chancellor, he was admitted to bail,⁸ being ordered to deliver an answer to the articles of impeachment in one month from that time. On the same day, the seventh article of impeachment, being presented to the house by Burke, was ordered to be carried up to the lords: and on the twenty-third, thirteen more articles were presented to the commons, which were also carried to the upper house on the twenty-eighth. No farther proceedings against Mr. Hastings took place this present session, which was closed on the thirteenth of May.

Conven-
tion with
France.

It appears from the correspondence of Mr. Pitt and lord Carmarthen with our ambassadors at Versailles and the Hague, that serious disagreements had arisen between the English and French subjects resident in India, relative to an article in the treaty of 1783, which secured to the latter a free and independent trade in that country; also that France and Holland had increased their naval forces in those seas to such an extent, as to cause serious apprehensions in the

⁸ Himself in £20,000, and two sureties (Messrs. Sullivan and Sumner) in £10,000 each.

mind of our government. France, indeed, soon after the American war, when she had succeeded in detaching the colonies from England, began to meditate aggression on a still more extended scale; and the plan of a confederacy was laid to inflict new wounds on this country before those made in the late war were healed. France, Spain, Holland, and the sultan of Mysore, entered into a compact of hostility against different parts of our territories; and the plan of these confederates, regarding India, was to unite the French and Dutch forces for an attack on British possessions; to restore to the native princes all their conquered provinces; and to secure for the two nations, factories and commercial establishments, which were to be free to the whole world: Trincomalee, in the island of Ceylon, was the place destined for the rendezvous of the troops, and the marquis de Bouillé⁹ was to command the expedition. The disastrous state of French finances, and events about to be detailed in Holland, prevented this Indian explosion; but Spain and Mysore succeeded, the former in provoking hostilities at Nootka Sound, the latter in kindling that blaze of war which consumed its principal agent. Mr. Pitt under these circumstances took advantage of Mr. Eden's residence in Paris, to arrange a convention, which was signed on the thirty-first of August; specific regulations being laid down, and the rights and privileges of the French factories clearly defined; but the pacific assurances which accompanied this document, were solely attributable to the domestic embarrassments of France and Holland.

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The dissensions which had for some time prevailed in the United Provinces, at length rose to such a height, as to demand the interposition of neighboring states. We have already seen, that the present stadtholder, who did not participate largely in those talents which distinguished the house of Nassau, had retired to Nimeguen, from the indignities offered to his person by the aristocratical party; while the people, who, in the late contest with the emperor, had been encouraged

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⁹ See his *Memoirs*, published in London, in 1797.

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to form themselves into armed associations, began to claim a share in the government, and assert their right to be represented in the legislative and executive councils. The party opposed to the stadtholder had long received encouragement from the court of Versailles, which hoped to gain an ascendancy in the United Provinces, and render them subservient to the interests of France; of which design England and Prussia, the two powers most interested in preserving the independence of the Dutch republic, were well aware: but Frederic the Great, though he resented the indignities offered to the husband of his niece, and presented several memorials to the States-General on the subject, had lost much of his former vigor, and was also inclined to favor French interests in opposition to those of Great Britain. His successor, however, had no such prejudices to encounter; nor did he want encouragement from his minister, count Hertzberg, to form a close alliance with England, as a counterpoise to the ambitious schemes of the two imperial courts, who were preparing to augment their own territories by a dismemberment of the Turkish empire: the best interests of France would have led her to join this Anglo-Prussian league; but nothing seemed capable of rescuing that unhappy country from the fate which ages of error and crime had been long preparing.

While affairs stood thus, the consort of the stadtholder, a high-spirited princess, and on that account peculiarly obnoxious to the prevailing party, undertook a journey to the Hague for the purpose of making some proposals from her husband to the States-General; but on the twenty-eighth of June, she was arrested in Holland, with her suite, by a body of armed burghers and a detachment of cavalry, who carried her back to Schonoven as prisoner: after remaining there under guard the whole of the next day, she was permitted to return to Nimeguen, though not without experiencing very insolent treatment from the soldiers who had her in custody. This indignity, offered to his sister, roused the spirit of the Prussian monarch, who insisted

that immediate satisfaction should be made, and exemplary punishment inflicted on those who had committed the outrage; but the states of Holland publicly justified the conduct of their troops, and contended that the measures pursued were necessary for preserving the peace of the province: the States-General, however, and even the court of Versailles, acknowledged the justice of Frederic William's complaint; though the French ministers still secretly encouraged the stadtholder's opponents; and even talked of assembling troops at Givet, in the territory of Liege, in order to oppose the interference of Prussia in the affairs of Holland: but they proceeded no farther than menaces.¹⁰

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Though nothing at this time could have been less agreeable to Mr. Pitt than the prospect of a war, engaged as he was in economical reforms and financial arrangements; yet the reduction of the United Provinces to a state of dependence on France was not to be endured: he, therefore, entered cordially into the king of Prussia's line of policy; and as the friends of the house of Orange were more in want of money than men, he privately supplied them with a loan without the authority of parliament; affording them all possible encouragement, and offering to the States-General, through our ambassador at the Hague,¹¹ the mediation of the British government for the restoration of their legitimate government under the authority of the stadtholder: as these offers, however, were rejected, and it was evident that nothing but the sword could decide the point in dispute; the oligarchical party applied for assistance to France, against the king of Prussia, who was now ready to march into the United Provinces, for the purpose of at once avenging

¹⁰ Bishop Tomline, in his *Life of Pitt*, asserts that 14,000 men were actually assembled at Givet, for the purpose of opposing the Prussians. The duke of Brunswick, however, is stated by other authorities to have declared, 'que s'il y avoit eu quelques tentes à Givet, il n'auroit pas continué sa marche, parceque le roi de Prusse ne vouloit pas, pour l'intérêt de sa sœur, s'engager dans une guerre avec la France, dont la maison d'Autriche n'auroit que trop profité. Mais en apprenant que les Français n'avoient pas un seul corps de troupes sous les armes, il jugea que la célébrité de son expédition en assureroit le succès,' &c. — *Séjour, Tableau Historique de l'Europe*, tome i. p. 129.

¹¹ Sir James Harris, afterwards lord Malmesbury.

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the insult offered to his sister, and restoring the prince of Orange to his office.

On the sixteenth of September, the court of Versailles made a regular notification to that of St. James's, of its intention to aid the States-general; which produced a reply, that in such a case, the king of Great Britain would take an active part in favor of the stadtholder; and a treaty was immediately signed with the great trader in men, the landgrave of Hesse Cassel, who agreed to furnish 12,000 troops within a short specified time, on condition of receiving an annual subsidy of £36,000. Mr. Pitt with his usual energy sent despatches, both by sea and land, to Bengal and Madras; directing their governors to be prepared, in case of war, to attack the French possessions, and to seize the Dutch settlements in the name of the stadtholder: it appeared in the answers to those despatches, that the French governor, as if expecting war, was strenuously employed in fortifying Pondicherry; while Tippoo Saib was expected to join him with all the force of Mysore.

The court of Versailles, however, perceiving the determined spirit of the British government, and distracted by its own financial embarrassments, declined all open co-operation with the aristocratic party; and was under the mortifying necessity of abandoning those designs on the United Provinces, which had long been among its most cherished projects. The duke of Brunswick, who commanded the Prussian forces in the contiguous duchy of Cleves, entered Holland at the head of 18,000 men on the thirteenth of September; and so rapid were his successes, that on the seventh day after the commencement of this invasion, he took possession of the Hague. Amsterdam alone made any show of resistance; but after a fortnight's siege it surrendered to the victorious arms of the duke; and to the astonishment of Europe, that proud republic, which maintained a contest of eighty years with Spain in the plenitude of her power, and resisted all the efforts of Louis XIV., was overrun by the Prussian troops in a single month: the stad-

holder, having made a triumphant entry into the Hague, was not only reinstated in his former privileges, but gratified with new; the ancient forms of government were re-established; and tranquillity being restored, the duke of Brunswick withdrew the main body of his forces before the end of October, leaving about 4000 men in the United Provinces: at the same time, an amicable arrangement was effected between the courts of England and France, by which it was agreed to discontinue warlike preparations on both sides, and to place the navy of each kingdom on the peace establishment. Thus, while Mr. Pitt was raising Great Britain to that degree of consideration among the continental powers which she held under the administration of his father, France was losing the reputation to which her position, and force, and the warlike spirit of her inhabitants naturally intitled her. As the disordered state of her finances was the greatest of her evils, changes were made in the measures connected with that department, which had been so ill managed by Calonne, that there was a deficiency of near £4,000,000 sterling, to be supplied by a loan; such however was the public terror at this announcement, that the parliament of Paris refused to register the royal edict; and the financial dispute soon grew into a quarrel respecting privilege: the king then issued a peremptory order, and the edict was finally registered; but not without a protest against the compulsion employed: his majesty, indignant at this insult on the royal authority, ordered the resolution to be torn out of the journals, and thus roused all the pride and passion which lay concealed under the dissolute manners of the nation. In this state of things, Calonne, as if madness ruled every act of his ministry, summoned the notables,¹² and laid the financial state of France before them; acknowledging that the annual expenditure exceeded the receipts by £4,000,000 sterling, and proposing a general land-tax,

¹² One hundred and forty-four persons under this denomination met at Versailles, including the princes of the blood, the chief nobles, the heads of the public bodies, and the deputies of provinces.

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with the abolition of all immunities, as the means of restoring an equilibrium. Having cast a share of the blame on Neckar for the deficiency above mentioned, he called forth a triumphant refutation of the charge from that financier, who, instead of an answer, received a sentence of exile: Neckar's party therefore, which included the principal writers of the day, the ecclesiastics, and a large portion of the noblesse, joined the opponents of the minister, who was assailed by all the privileged classes throughout the realm: in the exasperation caused by these events, Calonne gave hints of recurring to popular support; and the voice of La Fayette in the secret sittings of the notables was heard, inveighing against the abuses of irresponsible power, and demanding, as a remedy, the system of popular representation: the minister himself, though he dare not betray such sentiments at court, gave utterance to them in his indignation against the haughty chiefs who opposed his schemes; and they in return accomplished his overthrow: he retired to England; and M. de Brienne, archbishop of Toulouse, was chosen to succeed him; 'as weak a head,' says de Stael, 'as ever was covered by the perruque of a state counsellor.' The triumph of the notables was not long-lived; for within a month from the dismissal of Calonne, their assembly was dissolved, leaving to Brienne the task of protecting the privileged classes in their immunity from taxation.

The king, now finding it impossible to govern alone, had recourse, like the English monarch Charles I. in a similar predicament, to the parliament of Paris; but that body, elated by this deference to their authority, refused to sanction the new subsidies without an explanation of the purposes for which they were required: the pretext was plausible, but the intention was to create a contest for power. The king, enraged at this proceeding, used his prerogative in holding a bed of justice; and compelled them to register two edicts for a general land-tax, and a stamp act: but the parliament next day entered a protest on their journals, declaring that whoever should put either of those edicts

in force was a traitor; and Louis banished them to Troyes in Champagne: a violent outcry was then raised throughout the country; the edicts were laid aside; public business came almost to a stand, and the state was on the verge of bankruptcy: his majesty again summoned a parliament; and on the nineteenth of November, held a *seance royale*, which differed from a bed of justice, as it admitted debates in the royal presence. He now proposed two edicts; one for a succession of loans during five years, amounting in the whole to £19,000,000; and the other for restoring certain privileges to the protestants, who were the principal money-holders: in the debates that ensued, the speakers abused their privilege so far as to insult the king, who had no other resource than to fall back on his waning prerogative: he ordered the sitting to be closed, and the edicts registered; when the duke of Orleans stood forth, and denounced the proceedings as contrary to law; for which he was banished to his estates by a royal order: the parliament at length consented to register a new loan for the supply of pressing necessities, and the archbishop in return promised to convoke a meeting of the States-General within five years: such was the course of events, while the revolution advanced with rapid steps; and the privileged orders were obliged to retreat before it. Louis XVI. reformed his court, and dismissed a crowd of placemen; but it was not by such measures that the evils of so many centuries could be repaired.

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The continental affairs, in which Great Britain had been concerned, were considered sufficiently important to call parliament together so early as the twenty-seventh of November. The king, in his speech, expressed great satisfaction, that the disputes in the United Provinces, which not only threatened their constitution, but affected the security and interests of British dominions, had been so happily arranged; and after alluding to various other topics, he concluded with some reflections on the flourishing state of our revenue, and the advantages that might be expected from the continuance of public tranquillity. The

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addresses were voted in both houses with great unanimity; Mr. Fox acknowledging, 'that if it were possible for him on the present occasion to refuse his concurrence with the sentiments conveyed by his majesty's speech, or to oppose the motion, he should commit an outrage against all those principles and opinions by which his political career had been uniformly marked': he declared himself friendly to subsidiary treaties, though he did not possess sufficient information to enable him to give a decisive opinion on that concluded with Hesse Cassel: he remarked, that the agreement made by the two courts of France and England to disarm, was confined to the naval establishment, though his majesty, at the commencement of the disturbances in Holland, had spoken of augmenting his land forces: why then, he asked, were they not also to be reduced? This led him to notice another part of the speech, in which the maintenance of his majesty's dominions in an adequate state of defence was recommended: he had the honor to be in administration when the peace establishment was settled; and if it were inadequate, blame was due to him and his colleagues: but it had been continued now four years by their successors; and if circumstances rendered it insufficient, doubtless they would be ready to lay those circumstances before the house.

Mr. Pitt, after expressing great satisfaction at the coincidence of Mr. Fox's principles of foreign policy with his own, particularly observed, that with respect to the intended increase of the military establishment for the defence of our distant dominions, he should not consider how far proposed measures would tend to justify or condemn such as had been already passed; nor should he form a judgment of one administration by the conduct of another: such a practice might be a temptation to ministers to persevere in errors of their own, lest they should appear to acknowledge them; and to abandon the most politic measures of their predecessors, through fear of bearing testimony to their wisdom: his principle was to improve what he found well adapted to its object, without regarding primary

arrangements. Whether our military establishment had been originally too small, was not now the question; but rather what was the degree of defence actually necessary? for to that it ought immediately to be raised. Nothing, he observed, tended so much to the continuance of peace, as a state of preparation; and he acknowledged that the late important crisis had led him to look more carefully into our different establishments: hence his firm persuasion that they were of a less magnitude than circumstances required.

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The first business brought before the house of commons was a motion for granting one year's subsidy to the landgrave of Hesse Cassel; on which occasion Mr. Pitt observed, that this was part of a general system of continental connexions with a view to acquire and maintain that rank among European states which Great Britain had formerly held; and he contrasted the respectable figure she had made in recent transactions, with her humiliation in the last war, when she was deserted by every power in Europe. The importance of continental connexions, as well as that of the treaty under consideration, being acknowledged by Fox and Burke, the motion was carried unanimously: with respect to an increase of 3064 land forces, which Fox and his friends strenuously opposed as a censure on their judgment, Mr. Pitt stated, that there appeared but three ways of attempting to secure our West Indian islands; either by a large stationary fleet; or by sending out succors on the prospect of a rupture; or by maintaining a force in the islands adequate to a short defence. Experience in the last war showed that a naval force alone could not protect them; and with regard to the second expedient, not to mention that an attack could be made without any declaration of war, it might happen that we could not consistently with safety despatch a sufficient force from Europe; so that succors might not arrive in time to prevent the mischief: the last therefore appeared to him the only eligible measure; and the more so, when he considered the distance intervening between the islands, and the peculiarities of winds and currents, rendering it often

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impossible for a fleet to afford that speedy relief which occasion might require, unless there was on the island itself a sufficient force to secure it from surprise. He also proposed some additional fortifications, for which he had the sanction not only of a board of English officers, but of the ablest French engineers; since every island belonging to that nation was fortified; and they had even begun to erect works on those which they took from us in the last war: not to strengthen this valuable part of our dominions would be to invite attack from every hostile power; it would be to spare our wealth, while we were lavish of the prosperity of our empire. These wise sentiments prevailed, and the motion was carried by a majority of 242 votes against 80.

But it was not in our western possessions only that an additional force was required. During the late disputes, when a rupture with France was expected, government had prudently despatched four regiments for the better protection of our East Indian territories; and even after those disputes were settled, it was determined to render this addition to the military establishment a permanent measure: the directors had acceded to this proposal when originally made by the board of control; consenting that the troops should be conveyed in the ships, and maintained at the expense of the company: the amicable arrangement, however, lately effected with France, induced them to change their sentiments; and they contended that unless they themselves made the requisition, they were, by lord North's bill of 1781, relieved from the obligation of maintaining any regiments that might be sent to India; with which opinion the judgment of several eminent lawyers, whom they had consulted, appeared to coincide: on the other hand, Mr. Pitt, supported by the crown lawyers, asserted that the act of 1784 transferred to the board of control all powers formerly vested in the court of directors, relative to military and political concerns, as well as the collection and application of the revenues; considering those parts of the act of 1781 which were inconsistent with that

of 1784, as being by this latter act virtually, if not expressly, repealed. CHAP.
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Such different constructions laid on the two acts induced the minister to apply to parliament for leave to bring in a bill, which might remove any doubts respecting the power of the board of control on the points in question; and this motion was, after a long debate, carried without a division; though the bill introduced met with decided opposition in all its stages. Among other objections, it was stated, that if it were carried, an army might be established in India without the consent or knowledge of parliament; on which account Mr. Pitt proposed to add a clause limiting the number of troops, for the payment of which the commissioners should be empowered to issue orders. It was also urged, that the board might apply the revenues of India for the creation of undue influence, to the prejudice of the company's interests, by the increase of salaries or perquisites: the minister therefore proposed two other clauses, prohibiting gratuities, unless recommended by the directors; and stopping all increase of salary, unless proposed by them, and submitted to parliament: he also added a fourth, directing that in February, every year, there should be laid before parliament an account of the receipts, disbursements, and debts of the company. Every real objection to the declaratory act being thus obviated, it passed both houses, though accompanied with a protest signed by sixteen peers, reprobating it as friendly to intrigue and cabal, hostile to all good government, and abhorrent from the principles of the British constitution.

After having dwelt so long on the acts of his ministers, it will scarcely by thought inconsistent with the scope of history, if we briefly advert to the domestic life and manners of the monarch: it was in this year that his majesty addressed his celebrated letters to Arthur Young, on different subjects of practical agriculture; but neither his rural occupations, nor the manly pleasures of the chase, which he pursued with uncommon ardor, prevented him from observing with

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extreme concern the dissolute spirit which was beginning to prevail in the nation: feeling it therefore a duty incumbent on him to exert all his authority for the suppression of this evil, he announced his determination to discountenance or punish breaches of morals in all ranks, especially among such persons as were employed about the court or in the government: one of the first steps taken by him in prosecution of this design, was to re-issue the proclamation against vice, which had been published on his accession to the throne: he also called on the upper classes to set a good example, by attending more strictly to the offices of divine worship; and he earnestly enjoined the magistracy to punish and prevent all breaches of the sabbath-day: in fact, the habitual piety of the king was one of the most striking features in his character; very early manifested, and remaining with him, bright and glowing, to the last. Though a steady friend and zealous advocate of toleration, he was more especially anxious for the prosperity of the established church, which for a long period before his reign received little help from high example, and little honor at court: at the same time, every institution, which had for its object the diffusion of christianity, obtained the munificent support of his majesty. A greater number of societies for the promotion of religion and knowledge, and for the relief of human misery, were established during his reign, and chiefly under his patronage, than in the whole previous period since the Reformation in England; and it was chiefly owing to an interesting conversation which he held with the benevolent Howard respecting the wretched state of our prisons, that felons were now transported to Botany Bay in New South Wales: above all, this benevolent sovereign did not fail to add examples of charity to the precepts which he laid down for improving the morals of his subjects: many were his munificent acts toward the poor of Windsor; nor was his eye directed solely to the unmerited sufferings of poverty in his own vicinity, as the following anecdote will show. Among the several returns made to the house of commons, in compliance

with Mr. Gilbert's bill, was one from a poor Welsh curate, who, after detailing the calamities of his neighbors, thus concluded his account:—' But their distresses cannot be greater than my own: I have a wife far advanced in pregnancy; I have around me nine poor children, for whom I never yet could procure shoe or stocking: it is with difficulty I can supply them with bread; as my income is only thirty-five pounds per annum, for which I do the duty of four parishes.' This letter being shown to his majesty, he ordered an immediate inquiry to be made into the character of the curate; and finding it unexceptionable, he not only provided for some of his family, but allowed him fifty pounds per annum out of his privy purse. The domestic life of the royal family at this period is described, by those who had the honor of witnessing it, as affording an excellent specimen of calm and rational enjoyment intermingled with a faithful discharge of the social duties: his majesty rose very early; visited the house of God; and after the regular despatch of business, divided the day between manly amusements, frugal repasts, and domestic pleasures in the circle of his family; where, divesting himself of the pomp and cares of royalty, he could indulge in the tenderness and affection natural to his character.¹³ It may be remarked, that most of the qualities which George III. possessed, of the dispositions which he cherished, and of the virtues which he practised, were imitable and attainable by all classes: they were such as every genuine Englishman would wish to cultivate in himself, and in all most dear to him: accordingly, they produced a very striking effect on the people

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¹³ It is thus described in a letter of Mrs. Delany, dated May 17, 1787. ' At this time of the year the evenings are devoted by them to the terrace till eight o'clock, when they return to the Lodge to their tea and concert of music. Happy those who are admitted to that circle! Most evenings at half-past seven, I go to Miss Burney's apartments; and when the royal family return from the terrace, the king or one of the princesses (generally the youngest princess, Amelia) comes into the room, takes me by the hand, and leads me into the drawing-room, where there is a chair ready for me by the queen's left hand: the three eldest princesses sit round the table with the ladies in waiting: a vacant chair is left for the king, whenever he pleases to sit down: every one is employed with pencil, needle, or knotting. Between the pieces of music the conversation is easy and pleasant; and for an hour before the conclusion of the whole, the king plays at backgammon with one of his equeries, and I am dismissed.'

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whom he governed; furnishing an invaluable standard of practical excellence, to counteract the evil consequences of an unprecedented advance in wealth, luxury, and power.

In February, this year, two bishops were consecrated for the British colonies in America; and in October, the minister, as well as the public, sustained a severe loss by the death of the duke of Rutland, during his viceroyalty, in Ireland: this disinterested and patriotic nobleman was possessed of great judgment in the conduct of affairs, and administered his high office in a very liberal spirit of policy; wishing neither to aggrandise Great Britain by the ruin of Ireland, nor to advance the prosperity of Ireland at the expense of Great Britain: his funeral in Dublin was public, and conducted with much pomp and magnificence. At this time, the corps of engineers, hitherto deemed a civil establishment, was made military, and directed to rank with the artillery: banks also were for the first time established in the East Indies.

CHAPTER XXXI.

GEORGE III. (CONTINUED.)—1788.

Trial of Warren Hastings—Burke's opening speeches, &c.—Debates—First article of impeachment opened by Fox—Second by Mr. Adam—Sheridan's speech—Burke's opinion of its eloquence, &c.—Charge against sir Elijah Impey—Additions made to the bill for trying controverted elections—The budget, and flourishing state of the revenue—Mr. Pitt's plan for liquidating the claims of American loyalists—Question of the slave trade taken up by the public—Society formed, at the head of which is Mr. Wilberforce—Petitions—Committee of the privy council—Opposition to the design of abolishing slavery—The question taken up by Mr. Pitt—Sir William Dolben's motion for alleviating the suffering of slaves on the passage—Supported by Mr. Pitt, and carried—Treaties of alliance between Great Britain, the United Provinces, and Prussia—Object of them—Retirement of lord Mansfield from the bench—Derangement of his majesty—Conduct of the privy council and the two houses of parliament on this occasion—Death of the speaker—Regency bill introduced into the house of commons—The king's recovery, and national demonstrations of joy.

In the early part of this session the commons had appointed a committee of management for the impeachment of Hastings; and on the thirteenth of February, the trial commenced with every solemnity that the forms of official dignity could impart. Mr. Burke, at the head of the managers, all in full court dress, led the way to Westminster-hall, followed by the members of the house of commons and their officers, the judges of the land, the peers spiritual and temporal, and several members of the royal family: the state on this occasion clothed itself with all its majesty; and the person brought before its august tribunal was worthy of such solemn preparation; for Warren Hastings had

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been the grand support of British supremacy in the most perilous crisis which our eastern empire ever experienced.

The first two days of this celebrated trial were occupied in the arrangement of ceremonials. Mr. Hastings, having been called into court, was addressed by the lord chancellor in the following terms:—‘Warren Hastings, you stand at the bar of this court, charged with high crimes and misdemeanors, a copy of which has been delivered to you: you have been allowed counsel, and a long time for your defence: but this is not to be considered as a particular indulgence, since it arises from the necessity of the case; the crimes charged against you being stated as having been committed in a distant place. These charges contain most weighty allegations, and come from the highest authority: this circumstance, however, though it carries with it the most serious importance, is not to prevent you from making your defence in a firm and collected manner; in the confidence, that as a British subject, you are intitled to, and will receive, full justice from a British court:’ to which address Mr. Hastings answered,—‘My lords, I am come to this high tribunal, equally impressed with a confidence in my own integrity, and in the justice of the court before which I stand.’

The anxiety of the public to hear Mr. Burke on so vast and important a subject brought an immense concourse into the hall: the court was assembled to the number of 164 peers; and on the third day, the chancellor having called on the managers to proceed, their leader rose to perform the arduous task which had been delegated to him, and opened the impeachment by the following observations:—

‘My lords, the gentlemen who have it in command to support this impeachment of Mr. Hastings, have directed me to open the cause with a general view of the grounds on which the commons have proceeded in their charge against him: they have directed me to accompany this with another general view of the extent and magnitude, the nature and effect of the

crimes which they allege to have been by him committed: they have directed me to give an explanation of such circumstances preceding those crimes, or concomitant with them, as may tend to elucidate what is obscure in the articles; and have also wished me to add a few illustrative remarks on the laws, customs, opinions, and manners of the people who are the objects of the crimes we charge on Mr. Hastings.'

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From this source proceeded a long series of intellectual efforts, which rendered the whole trial an exhibition of elegant learning, of legal knowledge, and of oratorical ability, unequalled in the annals of history. The chief weight of it lay on Mr. Burke, who had devoted himself to the cause with unwearied assiduity, studying its materials, and mastering all its details with the most energetic force and comprehensive sagacity: the lustre which his ardent feelings and vivid eloquence threw over the dry matter of Indian policy, was even eclipsed by the acuteness with which he enforced every strong argument and detected every weak point, under the complicated difficulties of foreign concealment and of European technicalities: nor was less impression made by those fine philosophic reflections with which his speeches abounded; and which, derived as they were from a profound study of human nature, gave an inestimable value to all his productions; rendering them monuments of eloquence and wisdom, for the instruction of orators and statesmen, to the end of time.

Having held up the accused as a monster of iniquity, he concluded with a peroration, briefly adverting to the magnitude of the cause, the notoriety of the criminal, the solemnity of the tribunal, and that glorious array of prosecutors, the commons of England; who, though separated from a remote people by the material bounds and barriers of nature, were so united by the bonds of a social and moral community, as to resent the indignities and cruelties offered to the people of India, as if they had been their own: he then impeached Warren Hastings of high crimes and misdemeanors in the name of those commons, whose

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parliamentary trust had been betrayed, and whose national character had been dishonored: he impeached him in the name of that Indian people, whose laws, rights, and liberties had been subverted, whose property had been destroyed, and whose country had been rendered desolate: he impeached him in the name, and by virtue of those eternal laws of justice, which had been violated; in the name of human nature itself, cruelly outraged and oppressed, in both sexes, in every age, rank, situation, and condition.

This speech, the excellency of which was much disfigured by exaggeration and invective, occupied three hours for four days successively: a debate then ensued respecting the manner in which the defence should be conducted; and it was resolved that, according to the usual practice in trials, the prosecutor should complete his case before the accused commenced his defence. Mr. Fox then opened the first article of impeachment and was supported by Mr. Grey,¹ whose talents at an early period of his life attracted great attention from the house: the evidence was then brought forward, and the whole summed up by Mr. Anstruther, on the eleventh of April. Mr. Adam, on the fifteenth of the same month, opened the second accusation respecting the begums of Oude, the evidence on which was summed up by Sheridan with transcendent ability. This charge he had already enforced with extraordinary talent in the house of commons; and Fox, it is said, hopeless of any second flight ever rising to the grand elevation of the first, advised that the former speech should be, with very little alteration, repeated:² but the fountain of his friend's eloquence was far from being exhausted; for, confident in the resources both of his argumentative and imaginative powers, he poured forth a new and copious stream, which during four successive days diffused a species of enchantment among one of the most brilliant assemblages ever collected within a court of justice: at its conclusion Burke declared, 'that no species of oratory, no kind of

¹ Afterwards earl Grey.² Moore's Life of Sheridan, vol. i. p. 480.

eloquence, that had been heard in ancient or modern times, nothing which the acuteness of the bar, the dignity of the senate, or the morality of the pulpit could furnish, was equal to what they had that day heard in Westminster-hall; that no species of composition existed, of which a complete and perfect specimen might not be culled out of this speech; which, he was persuaded, had left too strong an impression on the minds of the assembly to be easily obliterated.' The outlines of this charge have been already given; and, as Mr. Moore observes, 'it was not only the strongest, and susceptible of the strongest coloring; but it had also the advantage of grouping together all the principal delinquents of the trial, and affording a gradation of hue, from the showy prominent enormities of the governor-general and sir Elijah Impey, in the front of the picture, to the subordinate and half-tint iniquity of the Middletons and Bristows in the back-ground.'³ Having, in the exordium of his celebrated harangue, dwelt with great energy and force on the importance of this inquiry, and also endeavored to conciliate the court by a warm tribute to the purity of English justice, he proceeded to attack the ready equivocation and disavowal of his own expressions, used by Mr. Hastings in regard to his defence:⁴ with great animation he described the feelings of eastern people with respect to the unapproachable sanctity of their zenanas; severely animadverted on the governor's exaction of so enormous a present as £100,000; and finely anticipated the plea of state necessity which would probably be set up: he described in vivid colors that swarm of English pensioners and placemen, who were still, in violation of the late purchased treaty, left to prey on

* 'It appears,' says Mr. Sheridan's biographer, 'that Burke had at first reserved this grand part in the drama for himself; but finding that Sheridan had also fixed his mind on it, he without hesitation resigned it into his hands; thus proving the sincerity of his zeal in the cause, by sacrificing even the vanity of talent to its success.'

⁴ At the commencement of the prosecution, he delivered at the bar of the commons, as his own, a written refutation of the charges; declaring that 'if truth could tend to convict him, he was content to be himself the channel to convey it:' but afterwards, on finding that he had imprudently committed himself, he disclaimed this document at the bar of the lords, and brought major Scott to prove that it had been drawn up by Messrs. Shore, Middleton, and others; that he had never seen it; and therefore ought not to be held accountable for its contents.

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the finances of the nabob: he exposed the ready and corrupt agents of the governor's exactions; thence descended to the following description of the desolation which the misgovernment of colonel Hannay, one of those agents, had brought on several provinces of Oude:—'If we could suppose a person to have come suddenly into the country, unacquainted with any circumstances that had passed since the days of Sujah u Dowla, he would naturally ask, what cruel hand has wrought this wide desolation; what barbarian foe has invaded the country, desolated its fields, depopulated its villages? he would ask, what disputed succession, civil rage, or frenzy of the inhabitants, had induced them to act in hostility to the words of God, and the beauteous works of man? he would ask, what religious zeal or frenzy had added to the mad despair and horrors of war? The ruin is unlike any thing that appears recorded in any age; it looks like neither the barbarities of man, nor the judgments of vindictive Heaven: there is a waste of desolation, as if caused by fell destroyers, never meaning to return, and making but a short period of their rapacity; it looks as if some fabled monster had forced its passage through the country, whose pestiferous breath had blasted more than its voracious appetite could devour. If there had been any men in that country, who had not their hearts and souls so subdued by fear, as to refuse to speak the truth at all on such a subject; they would have told him, there had been no war since the days of Sujah u Dowla, tyrant indeed as he was, but then deeply regretted by his subjects;—that no hostile blow of any enemy had been struck in the land;—that there had been no disputed succession, no civil war, no religious frenzy; but that these were the tokens of British friendship, marks left by the embraces of British allies, more dreadful than blows from the bitterest enemy: they would tell him, that these allies had converted a prince into a slave, to make him the principal in extortion on his subjects; that their rapacity had increased, in proportion as the means of supplying their avarice diminished; that they made

the sovereign pay, as if they had a right to an increased price, because the labor of extortion and plunder increased. To such causes they would tell him these calamities were owing.'

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A passage in the second day's speech, says Mr. Moore, is remarkable, as exhibiting a sort of tourney of intellect between Sheridan and Burke, in that field of abstract speculation which was the favorite arena of the latter: it alluded to a remark made by him in opening the prosecution; that prudence is a quality incompatible with vice, and can never be effectively enlisted in its cause; that no man who is bad, can be fit for any service that is good. 'It is a noble and a lovely sentiment,' said Sheridan, 'worthy the mind of him who uttered it; worthy that proud disdain, that generous scorn of the means and instruments of vice, which virtue and genius must ever feel: but I should doubt whether we can read the history of a Philip of Macedon, a Cæsar, or a Cromwell, without confessing that there have been evil purposes, baneful to the peace and rights of men, conducted, if I may not say with prudence or with wisdom, yet with awful craft, and with most successful and commanding subtlety. If however I might make a distinction, I should say, that it is the proud attempt to mix a variety of lordly crimes, which unsettles the prudence of the mind, and breeds this distraction of the brain: one master passion, domineering in the breast, may win the faculties of the understanding to advance its purpose, and direct to that object every thing which thought or human knowledge can effect; but to succeed, it must maintain a solitary despotism in the mind; each rival profligacy must stand aloof, or wait in abject vassalage on its throne; for that Power which has not forbidden the entrance of evil passions into man's mind, has at least forbidden their union: if they meet, they defeat their object; and their conquest, or their attempt at it, is tumult. Turn to the virtues—how different the decree! Formed to connect, to blend, to associate, and to co-operate; bearing the same course, with kindred energies and harmonious sympathy; each perfect in

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its own lovely sphere, each moving in its wider or more contracted orbit, with different but concentrating powers; guided by the same influence of reason, and endeavoring at the same blessed end—the happiness of the individual, the harmony of the species, and the glory of the Creator! In the vices, on the other hand, it is the discord that ensures the defeat: each clamors to be heard in its own barbarous language; each claims the exclusive cunning of the brain; each thwarts and reproaches the other: and even while their fell rage assails with common hate the peace and virtue of the world, the civil war among their own tumultuous legions defeats the purpose of the foul conspiracy: these are the furies of the mind, my lords, that unsettle the understanding; these are the furies that destroy the virtue of prudence; while the distracted brain and shivered intellect proclaim the tumult that is within; and bear their testimonies, from the mouth of God himself, to the foul condition of the heart.’

That part of the speech which occupied the third day, consisted chiefly of comments on the irrelevancy and inconsistency of the affidavits taken before sir Elijah Impey; in which the dryness of detail was enlivened by much playful humor: but it was on the fourth day of the oration, that he rose into his loftiest flights of eloquence; and left on record delineations of character, passion, and sentiment, as imperishable as the language in which they were spoken: in reference to the correspondence of the governor and his agent, he launched forth into the following beautiful description of filial affection.

‘When I see in many of these letters the infirmities of age made a subject of mockery and ridicule; when I see the feelings of a son treated by Mr. Middleton as puerile and contemptible; when I see an order sent from Mr. Hastings to harden that son’s heart, and to choke the struggles of nature in his bosom; when I see them pointing to the son’s name and to his standard, while marching to oppress the mother, as to a banner that gives dignity, that gives a holy sanction and a reverence to their enterprise; when I see and hear

these things; when I hear them brought into three deliberate defences set up against the charges of the commons;—my lords, I own I grow puzzled and confounded, almost beginning to doubt whether, where such a defence can be offered, it may not be tolerated. And yet, my lords, how can I support the claim of filial love by argument; much less the affections of a son to a mother, where love loses its awe, and veneration is mixed with tenderness? What can I say on such a subject? What can I do, but repeat the ready truths, which, by the quick impulse of the mind, must spring to the lips of every man on such a theme? Filial love! the moral of instinct, the sacrament of nature and duty; or rather, let me say, it is miscalled a duty; for it flows from the heart without effort, and is its delight, its indulgence, its enjoyment. It is guided, not by the slow dictates of reason; it awaits not encouragement from reflection or from thought; it asks no aid of memory: it is an innate, but active consciousness of having been the object of a thousand tender solitudes, a thousand waking watchful cares, of meek anxiety and patient sacrifices, unremarked and unrequited by the object: it is a gratitude founded on a conviction of obligations, not remembered, but more binding because not remembered; because conferred before the tender reason could acknowledge, or the infant memory record them; a gratitude and affection, which no circumstances should subdue, and which few can strengthen; a gratitude, in which even injury from the object, though it may blend regret, should never breed resentment; an affection, which can be increased only by the decay of those to whom we owe it; and which is then most fervent, when the tremulous voice of age, resistless in its feebleness, inquires for the natural protector of its cold decline.

‘If these are the general sentiments of man; what must be their depravity, what must be their degeneracy, who can blot out and erase from the bosom a virtue so deeply rooted in the human heart, and twined within the cords of life itself? Aliens from nature, apostates from humanity! And yet, if there be a

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crime more fell, more foul; if there be any thing worse than a wilful persecutor of his mother; it is that of a deliberate instigator and abettor to the deed: this it is that shocks, disgusts, and appals the mind, more than the other; to view, not a wilful parricide, but a parricide by compulsion; a miserable wretch, not actuated by the stubborn evils of his own worthless heart; not driven by the fury of his own distracted brain; but lending his sacrilegious hand, without any malice of his own, to answer the abandoned purposes of the human fiends that have subdued his will! To condemn crimes like these, we need not talk of laws, or of human rules: their foulness, their deformity, does not depend on local constitutions, on human institutes, or religious creeds: they are crimes; and the persons who perpetrate them are monsters, who violate the primitive condition, on which the earth was given to man: they are guilty by the general verdict of human kind.'

In the peroration of this magnificent speech, which was still reckoned, by Mr. Fox and others, inferior to that made by the same orator in the house of commons, he skilfully contrived, says his biographer, that the same sort of appeal to the purity of British justice, with which it opened, should, like the repetition of a solemn strain of music, recur at its close; leaving in the minds of the judges a composed and concentrated feeling of that great public duty which they had to perform. The court of directors had ordered an inquiry into the conduct of the begums, with a view to the restoration of their property, if it should appear that the charges against them were unfounded: but to this proceeding Mr. Hastings had objected, on the ground that these princesses themselves had not called for such interference; and that it was inconsistent with the 'majesty of justice,' to volunteer her services. The pompous and jesuitical style in which this doctrine was laid down by the governor-general in a letter to Mr. Macpherson, was very ingeniously turned to account by the orator, in winding up his masterly statement; 'and if nothing,' says Mr. Mill, 'remained

to stain the reputation of Warren Hastings but the principles avowed in this singular pleading, his character, among the friends of justice, would be sufficiently determined.'

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This was the last charge against the governor that came before the court in the present session of parliament; but another exposition of Indian delinquency was brought before the commons in the case of sir Elijah Impey; who, as it was stated, had corruptly added his new powers to the very force which they were intended to control; and had taken an active part in the oppressions, which it was his duty to avenge. Sir Gilbert Elliot presented six distinct articles of accusation against this magistrate, after having in a very eloquent speech supported two general principles:—that India must be redressed, or lost; and that the only mode left for redress was the punishment of some great and signal delinquents.

The first of these articles related to the trial and execution of Nuncomar for forgery; the last to the conduct of the chief justice in Oude and Benares, where he was designated as the governor's principal agent in the oppression of the begums. Sir Elijah, on his defence, contended, that in the acts with which he was charged, he had not exceeded the powers entrusted to him: respecting the first and most important accusation, he had been charged with extra-judicial interference, as condemning to death a person who was not subject to the jurisdiction of a British court, while, by the laws of India, forgery is not a capital crime: in answer to this, he argued, that although the authority of the supreme court did not extend over all the British provinces in India, it included the inhabitants of Calcutta; that Nuncomar had not been tried as a native of Bengal, but as a citizen of Calcutta, where he resided, and to the laws of which he was strictly amenable. As this mode of reasoning appeared satisfactory to the house, the first charge was negatived by a majority of seventy-three against fifty-five; and the others were not taken into consideration.

This year, Mr. Grenville proposed and carried cer-

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tain amendments and additions to his father's bill for better regulating the trial of controverted elections: the principal of these related to the interruption of public business by frivolous petitions; and it was now determined that the committee should have a power of adjudging the payment of costs against the party that was to blame.

Financial
measures
of Mr. Pitt.

On the sixth of May, Mr. Pitt proposed his budget for the year, and expressed great satisfaction at the flourishing state of our finances. Although some extraordinary expenses had been incurred by the events of last year; yet such was the improved condition of the revenue, that it afforded means of providing for all the services which had been voted, without any loan or new taxes, and without the least interruption to the action of the sinking fund; whence it was evident, that our financial concerns were in a state of progressive improvement: indeed, this was ascertained by fact and experience: the revenue of 1783 amounted to £10,000,000, besides the malt and land tax; and the revenue of 1787, with the same exclusion, amounted to £13,000,000: the additional imposts had not exceeded £1,500,000; hence the other £1,500,000 must have arisen from the suppression of smuggling, the better collection of the revenue, and increase of commerce: he was about to adopt farther regulations for the prevention of fraud, while commerce was extending itself in all its branches; so that he augured a greater excess of receipt above the national expenditure. Mr. Sheridan attempted to controvert these statements; but it was evident that financial computations were not within the latitude of his genius. In the supplies, 18,000 seamen were voted, and about 20,000 land forces, beside those that were on foreign service.

Soon after the conclusion of peace, commissioners had been appointed to inquire into the losses of the American loyalists; and their labors being nearly brought to a conclusion, Mr. Pitt, on the sixth of June, submitted to the house a plan of liquidation. Resting these claims, not on the ground of strict

justice, but on that of national generosity and compassion, he endeavored to mark this distinction in the arrangement he had formed; with which view he had divided the loyalists into three classes—first, those who resided in America at the beginning of the war, and from motives of duty to their sovereign had abandoned their estates and property; secondly, those who, at the commencement of the war, had been resident in England, and consequently had not been driven from their country; thirdly, those who, having enjoyed places or exercised professions in America, were compelled to leave it by the war. With regard to the first two classes, he proposed to pay to such the whole of their claims, if they did not exceed £10,000; and beyond that sum to deduct a *per centage*, greater in the case of the second class than in that of the first: to individuals of the third class, since they were able to obtain fresh incomes by the exertion of their talents, he proposed to allow pensions, proportional to the incomes which they had relinquished; those whose income had not exceeded £400, receiving one-half by way of annuity. All the different claims, thus calculated, would amount to £1,228,239, exclusive of about £500,000, already advanced at different periods. Mr. Pitt also submitted to the house the case of the East Florida claimants, who had been obliged to quit habitations and property, when their country was ceded to Spain: as their losses had arisen from the voluntary act of our government, the minister very justly thought they ought to be completely indemnified; and the sum required for this purpose was found to amount to £113,952. He proposed that all these sums should be raised by instalments; and that the money should be paid by the profits of a lottery, to be continued yearly till the whole was liquidated; negociable debentures being immediately issued, bearing an interest of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. This plan, which was highly satisfactory to the persons concerned, met with the decided approbation of parliament; and every part of the arrangement was executed, to the lasting honor, both of the minister and of the nation.

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Slave-trade
question.

In an enlightened age, it may appear more surprising that any advocate should be found for the continuance of a traffic in slaves, than that a large portion of the public should demand the abolition of a practice so disgraceful to humanity. The honor of first taking up the cause of the oppressed Africans, both in America and England, belongs to the sect of people called quakers: being embraced by the enthusiasm of religion and benevolence, it soon acquired votaries; and was recommended by eminent divines, and by many philanthropic writers, among dissenters as well as churchmen: an opinion was eagerly disseminated, that acquiescence in a state of slavery was incompatible with a sincere profession of christianity; and a topic repeatedly enforced, was, that difference of color is no reason for the forfeiture of liberty. While sympathy was excited, not only by speculative opinions on the evils of slavery in general, but by accounts of the horrid treatment which its unfortunate victims too often received from the brutality of their owners, a society was formed, and a considerable sum of money raised, with a view to collect information on the subject, and to support the expense of an application to parliament for its abolition; which, it was not doubted, would meet with all the resistance that self-interest could inspire: at the head of this party was Mr. Wilberforce, one of the members in parliament for the county of York; a gentleman of pious principles, indefatigable industry, and extensive information; who stood deservedly high in public opinion, as one who directed the advantages of fortune and influence to such pursuits as he thought conducive to virtue and the happiness of his fellow creatures. Conceiving the cause of the African slaves to be that of religion and humanity, and being desirous of reconciling political expediency with a discharge of christian and moral duty, he entered with great perseverance and minuteness into the revolting details of this traffic, in order that he might make himself master of a subject which he foresaw would employ the greater part of his life; and at an early period of the present year, he men-

tioned in the house his intention of making a motion respecting it during the course of the session: the consequence was, that numerous petitions were presented from the counties, as well as the most important towns of England, praying that so nefarious a traffic might be abolished; and a committee of the privy-council was appointed on the recommendation of Mr. Pitt, to inquire into the facts and allegations which they contained.

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While one party, however, exerted itself strenuously to render the abolition of slavery a popular question, another labored equally hard in opposing this design; while they attempted to prove that the advantages sought were ideal, founded on abstract theories of philanthropy, without any knowledge of the real state of the case. With regard to the supposed opposition of slavery to christianity, it was asserted, that the religion of Christ, seeking the ultimate happiness of man, finds its sources in individual disposition and character: that, comprehending all varieties of situation and sentiment, it delivers general rules, enforced by powerful motives, for the different duties of life; leaving political establishments to be formed, as external circumstances and the character of a people may determine. The evil of slavery itself was said to depend on opinion; and such a state being prevalent in Africa, the minds of the negro inhabitants were habituated to its contemplation, and regarded it as a common condition of life: in fact, it was asserted, the people in that quarter of the world had ever been in a state of warfare, where the victors always butchered the vanquished, until it was found that they could make a profit by selling them to European dealers: whence it followed, that slavery, so far from being such an evil as it was represented, became a comparative good, inasmuch as life in such circumstances was preferable to death. Moreover, it was said that the severities so much inveighed against were mostly ideal; for although individual instances might occur, in which the malignant passions were let loose, yet severity in general was not the interest of the planters;

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and the recurrence of cruel acts might be prevented by judicious regulations: the indolent and improvident habits of the negro were also dilated on; and it was shown, that, by placing him in a state where he was secured from the horrors of that famine by which he so often suffered in his native country, you placed him in a higher condition, according to his estimate of human good. Nor was an appeal to the interests and comforts of Europeans forgotten: the culture of the West Indian islands, it was said, depends on laborers inured to such a climate; and if we were to forego the advantages of those possessions, what would be the consequences? would not other European states seize on that which we had abandoned; and should we not be sacrificing our political greatness, as well as the large capital of individuals, embarked in advantageous commerce, by this deference to visionary theories, unfounded in fact or experience?

Thus stood the question, when Mr. Pitt, in consequence of an illness which prevented Mr. Wilberforce from making his intended motion, moved the following resolution, on the ninth of May:—‘That this house will, early next session, take into consideration the circumstances of the slave trade complained of in petitions presented to parliament; and what may seem fit to be done.’ he added, that before that time, inquiries instituted by the privy-council would be brought to a conclusion; the result of which might facilitate proceedings: he also pledged himself to submit this question to the house, in case the state of his honorable friend’s health should not allow him to propose it. Fox and Burke expressed great concern at any delay, while they severely reprobated the inquiry carried on before the privy-council; contending that it ought to have taken place before the house of commons, whose duty it was rather to advise the king, than to ask for his advice: the motion, however, was carried unanimously.

During the foregoing discussion, sir William Dolben called attention to an evil which demanded an immediate remedy: he alluded, not to the sufferings of the

slaves at the hands of their own countrymen, or of their unfeeling masters in the plantations; but to that intermediate state of tenfold misery which they endured in their passage from the coast of Africa to the West Indies. When put on ship-board, these unfortunate beings were chained together, hand and foot; the length allotted to each slave was five feet and a half, and the breadth sixteen inches; the distance between the deck, or floor, on which the wretched creatures lay, from the platform on which other bodies were spread, being little more than two feet: thus crammed together, in a hot climate, they generated putrid disorders and other dangerous diseases; so that when the overseers in the morning came to examine this freight of misery, they daily had to pick out numbers of the dead, and to unchain the carcasses from their fellow-sufferers to whom they had been fastened: nor did the crews of the slave-vessels escape the mortality thus produced; for great numbers of the seamen employed in the horrid traffic died every voyage; so that if some instant remedy were not applied, 10,000 lives might be lost before the next meeting.⁵ This statement made a strong impression on the house; and, toward the end of the month, sir William introduced a bill to regulate the passage of slaves in British vessels, and to limit their number in proportion to the tonnage of the vessel; also to require an account of slaves received on board, as well as of deaths, from the surgeon, attested on oath; and compelling the captains to use proper precautions for preserving their health. Strange to say, petitions were presented against this humane act of legislation by the merchants of Liverpool, Bristol, and London, stating the injury they must necessarily suffer from the proposed regulations. In this cause counsel was employed and witnesses examined; but facts reluctantly drawn from those brought forward in support of the present

⁵ It is dreadful to think, that the miseries here described in the intermediate passage, have increased ten-fold, in consequence of the humane attempts of Great Britain to abolish the system; which attempts European nations, calling themselves *christian*, resist; some covertly, and others like the degraded Portuguese and Spaniards, most audaciously; and all in defiance of treaties. Let us hope that shame if not better principles, will yet prevail among them.

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system, were so decisive against it, that the friends of the bill declined calling any evidence of their own. Mr. Pitt observed, that the trade, as then carried on, was contrary to every humane, every christian principle; and he indignantly exclaimed, that if it could not be transacted in any other manner, he would retract what he had said on a former day, and give his vote for the instant suppression of so revolting a traffic: he exhorted the house, since they now possessed information never before exhibited, to extricate themselves from that guilt and remorse, which every man must feel, for having so long overlooked such cruelties inflicted on human beings, in the course of a traffic carried on by British subjects, under the express authority of former parliaments. He felt confident that the house would support him in any measure to rescue, as speedily as possible, these miserable objects from the iron hand of unrelenting avarice: he should, therefore, propose a clause, rendering every slave-ship, which had already sailed from England, subject to the regulations of this bill, provided the captain was made acquainted with them; for which purpose he should think it proper to despatch a quick-sailing vessel, with copies of the act, to the coast of Africa; and he trusted the house would make compensation to the merchants who might thereby receive any pecuniary loss; an object of no consideration, when the interests of humanity were so intimately concerned: with a hope of exciting greater attention to the preservation of the slaves, he proposed another clause, granting certain bounties to owners and surgeons of ships, in which the mortality should not exceed certain proportions during the voyage.⁶ The bill, with those additions, passed the commons, after two divisions, by minorities of only five and two: it also passed the lords; but without considerable opposition, especially from lords Thurlow and Sidney, and the duke of Chandos: it was to continue in force till August, 1789; before which time it was hoped something more effective would be substituted in its place.

* Two and three in the hundred.

Mr. Pitt did not fail to profit by the favorable termination of disputes in Holland: on the fifteenth of April, he entered into a treaty of alliance with the States-General, for the maintenance of tranquillity, as well as for the good of both contracting parties. This treaty embraced a mutual guarantee of their dominions, a security for the existing form of government in the United Provinces, and regulations by which the commerce of each country was placed on the footing of the most favored nations: the same day, a similar document was signed at Berlin, between the United Provinces and Prussia; and on the thirteenth of June, a provisional treaty of defensive alliance was concluded at Loo between the kings of Great Britain and Prussia; in which, beside the usual articles of mutual agreement, the contracting parties bound themselves to act at all times in concert, for the maintenance of the security, independence, and government of the United Provinces. The object of these treaties was not so much to preserve the balance of power against the influence of France, as to counteract any ambitious attempts which might be made against it by the rulers of Austria and Russia, who had recently entered into a close union of counsels: indeed, the internal state of France, at this period, rendered her incapable, not only of disturbing the peace of her neighbors, but of assisting them in case of attack from any other quarter: from this very circumstance, therefore, arose the necessity of providing a barrier against that dangerous alliance which had been formed between the two imperial courts; and which, from its opposition to their former policy, as well as from the character of the reigning sovereigns, could be attributed to no other motives but those of conquest and aggrandisement: the war, which they were jointly carrying on against the Ottoman empire, tended strongly to confirm this opinion; and there was reason to suspect that, if successful, they would afterwards direct their hostile views to other quarters of Europe. The conduct which Great Britain might adopt at this period, was a matter of great political anxiety: while some supposed,

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that, inspired by resentment at the conduct of Russia in the armed neutrality, she would now oppose the schemes of that ambitious power : others argued, that she would take this opportunity of procuring more beneficial arrangements of commerce by seconding its favorite projects. In her final determination, however, she was actuated neither by a spirit of resentment nor of commercial gain ; but by that policy alone which could justify her interference in continental affairs ; the maintenance of a balance of power for the security and independence of the European states.

Retirement
of lord
Mansfield.

During the recess of parliament, the venerable earl of Mansfield, being anxious to enjoy a short interval of repose after so many years of labor, retired from the high office which he had so long filled with honor to himself and advantage to the public. He had presided in the court of king's bench for more than a quarter of a century, at a period when the British nation was rapidly advancing in commerce and wealth, and when the progressive state of society required the adaptation of existing laws to circumstances and cases never before contemplated. For effecting this he was eminently qualified, both by nature and education : he had profoundly studied history, ethics, and the philosophy of jurisprudence, as well as the principles of civil law, on which the judicial institutions of so many European nations are founded : being likewise endowed with a penetrating and comprehensive intellect, which inclined more to a constructive than to a literal interpretation of the law, he quickly perceived whether a case was new ; and if so, by what general principles or analogy its merits were to be determined. Thus, out of slender materials, he digested an admirable system of commercial jurisprudence ; whilst all his decisions in the reparation of injuries and the confirmation of civil rights, appear to have been the result of combined knowledge, wisdom, and equity. He was succeeded on the bench by the master of the rolls, who was called up to the house of peers by the title of lord Kenyon.

In the early part of this summer, the king's health

was found to have suffered considerably by political anxiety, close application to business, and the custom of taking violent exercise: accordingly, on the day following the prorogation of parliament, he went to Cheltenham, by the advice of his physicians; but did not derive the expected benefit from its medicinal waters. On the sixteenth of August, he returned to Windsor, where his disorder took a very unfortunate turn; for symptoms of mental derangement occasionally appeared, which gradually increased, until he was no longer capable of attending to public business: at the same time, the paroxysms of the malady, accompanied as they were with bilious affections, brought on so violent a fever, that during several days his majesty's life was in imminent danger, and he became totally and constantly deprived of the use of reason. Ministers had intended that parliament should not meet till after Christmas; but, as it had been prorogued to the twentieth of November, and the king was unable, from the continuance of his mental disorder, to extend its prorogation, circular letters were issued, requesting the attendance of members on that day. When they had assembled, the state of his majesty's health was formally notified to the peers by the lord chancellor, and to the commons by Mr. Pitt; who, after intimating the propriety of omitting all discussion of public business under present circumstances, concluded by moving that they should adjourn to the fourth of December, for which day a call of the house should take place; when, if his majesty's disorder unfortunately continued, they might consider what measures ought to be adopted. This proposal was immediately acceded to; and a similar motion passed in the house of peers, at the instance of lord Camden.

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Derangement of his
majesty.

That some authentic information relative to his majesty's situation might be obtained, a privy-council was held at Whitehall on the third of December; and five physicians,⁷ who had attended the king, were examined on oath. The result of their opinion was,

Conduct
of privy-
council and
parliament.

⁷ Dr. Warren, sir G. Baker, sir L. Pepys, Dr. Reynolds, and Dr. Addington.

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that his majesty's indisposition rendered him quite incapable of attending to public business; that, judging from their experience in similar cases, there was a fair probability of his recovery; but that no time for that happy event could be fixed on with any degree of certainty: next day, the minister presented this report to the house of commons; moving that it should be taken into consideration on the eighth; and giving notice, that he should then propose the appointment of a committee, to search for precedents applicable to the present unhappy state of affairs. The motion was unanimously agreed to; but doubts were expressed, whether the house ought to rest satisfied without a personal examination of the physicians, on whose testimony they were to found measures of such importance. Mr. Fox admitted, with Mr. Pitt, that all possible delicacy ought to be observed; but if delicacy and duty should happen to clash, the latter ought not to be sacrificed to the former: nothing farther was at this time said on the subject; but as a vacancy soon occurred in the representation of Colchester, the speaker expressed a doubt whether, during the inefficiency of one branch of the legislature, he was authorised to issue a new writ. Mr. Pitt declared his opinion, that although no act could take place which required a concurrence of all the branches; yet each house, in its separate capacity, was fully competent to exercise those powers which concerned its own peculiar jurisdiction; in which sentiment the house acquiesced, and immediately adjourned to the eighth. The royal family now removed to Kew, for the greater convenience of the king's medical attendants; and as the disorder continued without abatement, Dr. Willis, who had been highly distinguished for his successful treatment of this malady, was called in, to undertake the principal and constant charge of his majesty, whom the other physicians visited only at stated times.

On the eighth of December, the minister related these circumstances in the house, and moved for a committee to examine the medical gentlemen respecting the state of the king's health, and report such

examination: this motion being approved, a committee of twenty-one persons was appointed, of which Mr. Pitt was chosen to be the chairman: next day, when they met, those physicians who had been already examined by a privy-council repeated the opinions which they had before delivered; and Dr. Willis expressed a confident expectation that his majesty would recover, though he could not pronounce how long his illness might continue: the view which he took of the king's malady was very different from that of the regular practitioners; and at his recommendation a new plan was adopted, from which he expected happy results. This report being laid on the table, another motion was made by Pitt, on the tenth, for the appointment of a committee to inspect the journals for precedents; on which, Fox immediately rose, and asked, what precedents they were going to search for? not precedents on their journals; not parliamentary precedents; but precedents in the history of England: there existed none in their journals, which could bear on the present case: besides, all that was requisite for a decision had been done by the report just brought up: by that the incapacity of the sovereign had been ascertained; and he advanced it as a proposition, deducible from the principles of the constitution, and the analogy of the laws of hereditary succession, that as long as the sovereign was incapable of exercising his high functions, the heir apparent, provided he be of full age and capacity, had an indisputable claim to the executive authority, in the name and behalf of his majesty: he thought it candid, entertaining such an opinion, to come forward fairly and avow it: that the prince himself had not urged his claim, he imputed to his well-known moderation, and his reverence for those principles, in the maintenance of which his family had flourished so happily on the throne of these realms.

The minister, who had made himself master of all the bearings on this question, instantly perceived that his antagonist had put forward an opinion which he could not substantiate; and which, besides, was not likely to become popular either in parliament or in the

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country at large: taking advantage therefore of this imprudence, he defied the right honorable gentleman to support it by any analogy or precedent, or reconcile it to the spirit and genius of our constitution: the very intimation of this claim was an unanswerable reason for the appointment of the proposed committee; otherwise, the house would be excluded from all deliberation on the subject: he was confident, that to assert the existence of such an inherent right in the prince of Wales, or any one else, independent of the decision of parliament, was little less than treason to the constitution: it was virtually to revive those exploded ideas of the divine and indefeasible authority of princes, which had so justly sunk into contempt, and almost into oblivion. 'Kings and princes,' said he, 'derived their power from the people; and to the people alone, by means of their representatives, did it belong to decide in cases for which the constitution had made no specific provision:' on these grounds he insisted that the prince had no more right to supply the existing deficiency than any other subject; though he admitted that it was expedient for parliament to offer him the regency.

Thus was another grand political question at issue between these two rival statesmen, in which, it has been remarked, Mr. Pitt, who had lately stood forth as the champion of prerogative, now proclaimed himself a zealous assertor of popular rights; while Fox, who had been distinguished as a ready advocate of the people, appeared to be a deserter from the principles of liberty, and to lean toward prerogative. As applied to Pitt, the opinion is but partially correct: he certainly supported the rights of parliament; but not in opposition to the royal prerogative: on the contrary, all his efforts had for their object, to prevent the crown from losing any of its lawful appendages, and to secure for the sovereign certain means of resuming the kingly power in its utmost plenitude, whenever that incapacity should cease, which could alone justify the transfer of it to another: constitutionally speaking, he was the supporter of popular rights; for being well versed in

constitutional history, he knew that the royal prerogative formed an essential part of the rights of the people; nay, that support given to the lawful rights of any component branch of the British constitution, is so far from injuring those of the other, that it has a direct tendency to preserve them.

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In the house of peers, lord Loughborough supported the position held by Fox, and endeavored with much legal ingenuity to prove that the right ascribed to the prince was deducible from the act of settlement, as well as analogous to the principles of English law; that it was a privilege peculiar to his royal highness, and belonging to no other person: he was seconded, in this view of the subject, by lord Stormont; though it was reprobated with much severity by that great constitutional lawyer, lord Camden: both sides, however, admitted that the right claimed for the heir apparent ought not to be exercised until parliament had declared the sovereign's incapacity. Mr. Fox, at the next meeting of the commons, being aware that his assertions had not only been ill received by a great part of the house, but had also caused a considerable sensation in the country, relinquished the idea of pressing the prince's claim on parliament; and was now only anxious to procure for him a full enjoyment of royalty, under the appointment of the two houses: the position which he was still ready to maintain was, that parliament had a right to determine on the incapacity; but after such determination, the heir apparent had a right of government during that incapacity: as, however, Pitt agreed with him, that, under present circumstances, the prince was the person who ought to be invested with the office of regent, he thought the more prudent course would be to abstain from any discussion of such nice and subtile distinctions.

The minister, in reply, declared that he still differed as much as ever from Mr. Fox, regarding the question of right; and he not only challenged that gentleman to bring forward precedent or law in support of his doctrine; but actually showed from history, that such

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a claim of right had been made, and had been resisted by parliament.⁸ As Fox, at this time, had some apprehension that a council of regency would be proposed, greatly restricting the powers of the prince, he requested the premier to state what sort of proposition he meant to bring forward on the sixteenth, not only as a convenience to himself and his friends, but that the house might be prepared to discuss it, with some degree of knowledge respecting its propriety and expediency. Mr. Pitt expressed himself ready to give the honorable gentleman every satisfaction in his power with respect to the plan intended to be pursued; but declared, that he should offer no point for discussion, until the house knew whether they were sitting as judges, merely to pronounce on the king's incapacity; or as an assembly possessing a power of deliberation, and capable of exercising their own discretion. They must first ascertain, whether that which should be vested in the prince was a matter of adjudication on their part, or a trust on behalf and in the name of his majesty: if this question were settled, in what he thought a constitutional manner, he should afterwards propose specific measures: these he now proceeded to explain; observing, that whatever part of the royal power was necessary to be exercised in this unhappy interval, should be vested in a single person, unfettered by any permanent council, and free as to the choice of his political servants; also, that this person should be the prince of Wales; but with regard to such portion of the royal authority as ought to be given, any discussion at present would be premature; though he had no objection to declare generally, that whatever was necessary for carrying on the public business with vigor and despatch, and for securing the public interests, should be given; while, on the other hand, he thought that all which was not necessary for those purposes, or which might be employed so as to embarrass the king in the exercise

⁸ In the reign of Henry VI., when the duke of Gloucester claimed the regency during the minority of the king; and at the revolution, when, the king ceasing to act, parliament did what amounted to a legislative act, and resolved to settle the crown on the prince and princess of Orange jointly.

of his authority when he should be able to resume it, ought to be withheld, for the sake of the future interests, both of the people and of the crown: whatever, in short, was given, or withheld, ought to be considered with a regard to the moment, when his majesty should be capable of resuming his lawful prerogatives. As to himself, whatever judgment might be formed of these declarations, he felt conscious that he had declared his opinion freely and honestly.

Mr. Fox acknowledged that the minister had stated, with extreme candor, as much as they had a right to expect from him: he now strongly deprecated any agitation of the question of right; but Sheridan, with great want of discretion, warned Mr. Pitt 'of the danger of provoking that claim to be asserted, which had not yet been preferred;' on which, the other instantly rose, and declared that he had now an additional reason for maintaining the authority of the house, and settling the boundaries of right; since the deliberative powers of parliament were invaded, and an indecent menace was thrown out to overawe and influence their proceedings: he trusted, however, that the house would do its duty, in spite of any threat; 'however high the quarter from which it might come.'

What passed during the debates on this subject was so misrepresented to the prince, as to induce him to think that the whole scheme of a regency would be opened on the sixteenth; under which impression, he wrote on the fifteenth to the lord chancellor, complaining of the minister's conduct, not only in this instance, but ever since the commencement of the king's illness;⁹ especially of his intention to bring forward a plan, by which he, the prince, was to be appointed regent, without any previous communication held with him. The part indeed which Pitt took at this important period exposed him to suspicions most grating to a generous mind; to the imputation of motives which he abhorred, and to reproaches which he would have scorned to deserve: but no taunts or invectives shook the firmness of his character; and his

⁹ Tomline, vol. ii. p. 387.

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conduct, in this respect, was the more deserving of praise; since he could look to nothing as the consequence of it, but dismissal from office, at a time when his fortune had been impaired by an unavoidable neglect of personal concerns, through the magnitude and extent of his official duties. Determined, however, to do himself justice, as far as possible, in the eyes of his royal highness, he addressed a letter to him on the fifteenth, explanatory of his own conduct, and of the reasons which induced him to disclose the general outline of the plan to be adopted; but whether this explanation was satisfactory or not, he had no means of knowing; for he was not honored with any reply.¹⁰

In a committee of the house, on the sixteenth, the premier moved three resolutions, which he prefaced by an able speech. The first, he observed, related solely to a matter of fact, stating, on the authority of the physicians, that an interruption had taken place in the exercise of the regal power; the second asserted, that parliament had a right to provide means for supplying this defect in the personal exercise of royal authority, during his majesty's indisposition; the third declared, that it belonged to parliament to determine on means by which the royal assent might be given to bills respecting the exercise of the regal power, in the name and behalf of his majesty.

The first of these resolutions caused no remark; but the second was long and strenuously debated, both at the time of proposal, and also when the resolutions were reported to the house on the nineteenth: in the first instance, Pitt placed the question on the fairest ground; being determined to argue it on that real difference of opinion existing between himself and Fox. The honorable gentleman, he said, if he rightly conceived his meaning, had asserted that the heir apparent, when the incapacity of the king was declared by parliament, had as indisputable a right to the full exercise of all his father's functions, as if his majesty had died a natural death: he, however, denied that this right could be proved to exist, by any pre-

¹⁰ Tomline, vol. ii. p. 392.

cedent, positive law, or principles of the constitution; and he called on his opponent to point out a single case of infancy, infirmity, or illness in a sovereign, where the full powers of that sovereign had been claimed and exercised by any individual. In referring the committee to precedents given in the report on the table, he showed that their result formed an undeniable proof that no such right existed;¹¹ nor was there any particular law, or any analogy from law, to support it: with regard to the principles of the British constitution, he asserted, that in most countries so calamitous an event would have gone nigh to dissolve all the bonds of political union; but in this more happily tempered form of government, though the third estate of the legislature might be deficient, yet the organs of speech in the people remained intire, by means of their representatives, the two houses; and through them the sense of the nation might be taken. The lords and commons represented all estates of the people; and their right it was to provide for such deficiency: nor did he state this merely as his own opinion: it was the opinion of those who had framed the revolution; who had not, as now, to provide for the interruption of regal powers, while the throne was full; but to supply a deficiency in the third branch of the legislature, which was wholly vacant: whether, however, that third branch was intirely gone, or suffered only a suspension, an equal necessity existed for recurring to the organs of the people's speech. As the power of filling the throne rested with the people at the revolution, and was exercised by parliament; so, on the same principles of liberty, on the same rights of parliament, did the providing for this present deficiency rest with the people; that is, with the lords and commons, their proper representatives.

Fox had on the former day described his majesty's situation as a civil death; against such a representation he now protested; for if it were so, his royal highness would immediately ascend the throne, not as regent, but with full exercise of royalty; since a civil,

¹¹ Tomline, vol. ii. p. 398.

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like a natural death, was permanent: he stated, on the authority of Blackstone, that there were but two causes of civil death; banishment from the realm by process of law, or the profession of monastic vows; and would any man pretend that either of these was analogous to the present visitation of Providence, which might, and probably would be, only a temporary blow? Pitt also noticed some arguments which had been used in favor of the prince's claim to the regency, on the ground of his having certain rights which did not belong to any other person; and he contended, that the existence of such rights, which he did not deny, no more proved his right to the regency, than the possession of an estate in Middlesex proved that the possessor had another in Yorkshire, and a third in Cornwall. In conclusion, he expressed his hopes, that the house would feel a conviction, that, if they had a right, they had also a duty; a duty, which neither allegiance, nor affection to their sovereign, would allow them to dispense with: it was absolutely necessary, not only unequivocally to declare their own right, so that it might remain ascertained beyond the possibility of doubt hereafter, and become secured to posterity; but to proceed immediately in taking preparatory steps for the exercise of that right; which was the object of his third resolution.¹²

Fox found it so difficult to answer this speech, that, after objecting to the precedents quoted by his antagonist, as drawn from dark and barbarous periods of our history, and vindicating himself from the notion of being influenced by the favor of the prince, he digressed from the question of right to that of expediency; and concluded with a personal attack on the minister, as a person who would sacrifice the principles of the constitution to his tenacious lust of power. Pitt not only rebutted this charge, but enforced his former arguments with such ability and address, that lord North's motion, for the chairman to leave the

¹² Its purport was to empower the lord chancellor to affix the great seal to such bill of limitations as might be necessary to restrict the power of the future regent.

chair, was negatived by a majority of 268 against 204; and the resolutions passed without a division.

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When these were reported to the house three days afterwards, the third was objected to as unnecessary and unconstitutional; and it was warmly contended, that as all agreed that the regency should be conferred on the prince of Wales, it would be more simple, and more conformable to what was done at the time of the revolution, if an address were presented to his royal highness, requesting him to assume the administration of government during his majesty's incapacity: an amendment to this effect was moved by Mr. Dempster; and the debate being deferred to the next day, it was then negatived by 251 votes against 178. The three resolutions were, at a conference, delivered to the house of lords, who agreed to them, after two long debates, and one division, in which the numbers were ninety-nine and sixty-six.

The two remaining branches of the legislature having thus established the principles on which they were to act, Mr. Pitt submitted to the prince of Wales the heads of a plan arranged by the cabinet, in a letter, dated December 30. This went to invest his royal highness with a power of exercising regal authority; which, however, was not to extend to the granting of any real or personal property belonging to the king, or any pension or office, for any other term than during his majesty's pleasure, except such as must by law be granted for life or during good behavior; nor to the granting of any peerage, except to such of his majesty's issue as shall have arrived at the age of twenty-one years; at the same time it was intimated, that the care of the king's person, and the disposition of the royal household, would be committed to the queen. The answer sent by his royal highness to this communication seems to have been dictated by that spirit of resentment, which the party, whose speculations it thwarted, would naturally feel. After commenting on its terms, which he characterised as a project for introducing weakness, disorder, and insecurity into every branch of administration; as a

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scheme for dividing the members of the royal family from each other, and separating the court from the state; as a design for disconnecting the authority to command service from the power of animating it by reward; and for allotting to the prince all the invidious duties of government, without the means of softening them to the public by any act of grace or favor,—he consented to undertake the painful trust imposed on him, from a conviction of the evils which would arise to the king's interests, to the peace of the royal family, and to the welfare of the nation, if the government remained longer in its maimed and debilitated state. Mr. Pitt, in a second letter to the prince, expressed deep regret, on the part of himself and his colleagues, that a plan, which had been formed after the maturest deliberation, and with the best intentions, should have appeared liable to the observations made on it by his royal highness; but considering the principles of that plan as resulting from their indispensable duty to the sovereign and to the public, they felt themselves bound to adhere to them in the propositions that might be offered to parliament.

At this time the business of the house of commons experienced a short interruption by the death of its Speaker, on the second of January: on the fifth, Mr. William Grenville was proposed as his successor by the friends of administration, and sir Gilbert Elliot by the opposite party; when the former was chosen by a large majority; and immediately afterwards, the minister gave notice, that he should next day lay before parliament the restrictions which he considered necessary to be annexed to the regency.

Other incidents now occurred, chiefly owing to the imprudence of Fox and his party, which threw every advantage into the hands of their antagonist. The minister, after combating and overthrowing the claim of right set up for the heir apparent, had fully admitted that he was the person most proper to exercise the regal functions; and having established the restrictions which he thought requisite, and which were to last only for a definite time, was prepared to give up office,

and invest his royal highness with a regent's authority. He had surmised that the two houses would act at once on the report of the privy-council of December 3; but Fox, whose obvious policy was to proceed with despatch, from that moment seemed to study nothing but delay: no man was more eager for power; and he must have known the advantages which a ministry in possession of place would possess over a ministry broken up and excluded from office, even in the event of the king's recovery: but all was in vain; he went on, tampering with fortune, debating, and opposing, until the king recovered; and the power of his great rival became more firmly established than ever. Notwithstanding the minister's reluctance to bring the royal physicians to that open and rude test, in which reference to many personal and painful circumstances of his majesty's illness would be necessary, Fox determined that they should be examined at the bar of the house; and Mr. Loveden, member for Abingdon, was urged by the opposition to make a motion to that effect. Pitt, after having at first opposed it, ultimately acquiesced in this course: but the examination, which ought to have been as brief as possible, was prolonged by frivolous questions from opposition members, and by frequent altercations; so that the report was not brought up before Tuesday the thirteenth of January, and was appointed to be taken into consideration the following Friday; on which day the minister introduced his plan of a restricted regency. The subject, he observed, divided itself into three heads;—the nature of the king's illness; the principles on which parliament was authorised to act on this occasion; and the application of those principles to the measures which he should propose, for remedying the present deficiency: from the recent examination of the physicians, the house must be confirmed in its conclusions drawn from their former statement, that his majesty's illness rendered him incapable of personally exercising his high functions, although his recovery was probable: in these two points all the physicians agreed; but Dr. Willis, whose experience was by far the greatest, and

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who alone was in constant attendance on his majesty, declared, that since the former examination symptoms were more favorable, and the disorder had begun to abate: he felt himself justified, therefore, in stating, that what the houses had to provide for, was no more than a temporary deficiency; but if his majesty's illness should be unfortunately protracted, parliament might then proceed to do, what was now clearly unnecessary; that is, to form a more permanent plan.

The principles on which they were to proceed, said Mr. Pitt, arose from the nature and probable duration of the present deficiency: they were to provide for this necessity only, and to do no more than what it required; they were also to guard against any embarrassment in his majesty's resumption of authority, and therefore to grant such powers only as were requisite for the government of the country with energy and effect: on these principles he had framed his plan; of which the outlines were exhibited in his letter to the prince of Wales; who was to exercise the whole regal authority, subject to restrictions, that were not intended to interfere with the despatch of public business. He then detailed those restrictions, as they regarded the peerage, the distribution of places and pensions, the king's property, and the care of the royal person.

With regard to the first limitation, he adduced three grounds on which the prerogative rested: first, it was designed to enable the sovereign to counteract the designs of any factious cabal in the house of lords; secondly, to reward eminent merit; and thirdly, to provide for the fluctuations of wealth and property in the country, by raising men of great landed interest to the peerage; by which means that branch of the legislature might always be kept on its true and proper basis. For none of these purposes was the exercise of this prerogative necessary in the present instance: but on the other hand, if it were committed to the regent, such a number of peers might be created, as would greatly embarrass the king's government, on his restoration to health: on the same principle was founded the second restriction: the powers restrained were not

necessary to the executive government, which was to be held temporarily by the regent; while their exercise might be injurious to the sovereign on his recovery: the third restriction he scarcely thought necessary, except as showing a desire to act on parliamentary principles, and to make their provisions as comprehensive as possible: with regard to the fourth resolution, by which it was intended not only to place the king's person under the care of the queen, but to subject the whole of his majesty's household to her authority, Mr. Pitt observed; that, unless she had the means of dismissing and appointing any officer at her pleasure, she could not discharge this important trust: a council indeed would be named to assist her majesty with its advice, but without any power of control; trustees would be appointed to manage the real and personal estates of the king, but without any authority to dispose of them, except in the granting of leases.

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These propositions were strenuously supported in arguments, brought forward by the minister and others: the law officers maintained, that the king's political character, being inseparable from his personal character, would remain perfect and intire till his natural demise; and to this principle frequent reference was made in the course of the debates. Mr. Powys, after condemning the whole plan as a monstrous fabric, which tended to mutilate the constitutional authority of the crown, and asserting that the heir apparent ought to be invested with the full powers and prerogatives of royalty, moved an amendment to the first resolution, by which his royal highness would be appointed regent, 'subject to such limitations and exceptions as might be provided.' A long debate ensued, in which the new Speaker vindicated the proposed plan by very extensive details, elaborate research, and accurate induction; detaining and engaging the attention of the house for the space of three hours, while he delivered his sentiments. From the constitutional history of the kingdom, he showed, that the principle on which our ancestors granted and limited the powers of a regent, was the same as that

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applied to the present occasion; in which it was proposed, on the one hand, to establish a government capable of executing the public business; and on the other, to provide ample security for the sovereign to resume his authority without embarrassment: keeping this principle in view, he applied it to the various restrictions; contending, that the extent of the delegation was sufficient for the due execution of the trust, and that the restrictions were necessary to the security of resumption.

Mr. Fox with his usual energy impugned the doctrine of the law officers; declaring himself incapable of understanding how a person, whose political faculties were suspended by a visitation of Providence, could still exist in the full enjoyment of his political character: while the supporters of this doctrine took up the superstitions of antiquity, they rejected its morality; they enveloped the sacred person of the king with a political veil, calculated to inspire awe and obedience; but labored to enfeeble the arms of government, to cripple it in its essential parts, to expose it to hostile attack, and to divest it of the dignity appertaining to itself, as well as the use for which it was designed in behalf of the people. He reprobated, with peculiar severity, the restrictions which regarded the peerage: Mr. Pitt had conferred that rank on no less than forty-two persons during his five years of office, without having the pretext of saying that any cabal existed to thwart his measures in the house of lords: if then such were the means to which he had been obliged to resort, encompassed as he was with all the power and influence of the crown; what must be the condition of those, who would have to contend, in a crippled state, against an opposition armed with so large a portion of government patronage? He expressed also his abhorrence of a project, which, placing in a state of competition persons connected by blood, duty, and affection, excited that mutual jealousy, which is in some degree inseparable from the human mind.

Lord North also, though declining in years and

afflicted with blindness, took an active part against the measure. Expatiating on the arguments used in support of it, 'the minister,' he said, 'strains at a gnat, but swallows a camel: he is not afraid to delegate the great functions of executive power, but he startles at the small: take the patronage, take the disposal of the civil, political, and military appointments, but keep away from court; command the army and navy, but abstain from the household troops; break down every barrier of the constitution, and cripple the sovereign power; but touch not the pages, gentlemen ushers, or lords of the bed-chamber: this,' said his lordship, 'reminds me of my old nurse's stories about the achievements of witches: they can ride through the air, agitate the elements, raise wind and rain, lightning and thunder: all this they can do without flinching; but if they come to a straw, there they boggle, stumble, and can proceed no farther:' but notwithstanding all the force of argument and ridicule which could be brought against them, the resolutions passed the house, and were, on the twentieth, communicated to the lords. On the twenty-sixth, the commons were informed of their concurrence; and it was then voted that a communication should be made to the prince and queen of the measures taken, and their consent be requested: accordingly, on the thirtieth of January, the resolutions were presented to those illustrious personages by a committee of peers and commoners. The answer of his royal highness was similar in substance to the concluding part of his letter to the minister: her majesty's reply, communicated by lord Courtown, declared, that 'duty and gratitude to the king, with a sense of her obligations to this country, would engage her earnest attention to the momentous trust reposed in her by parliament; while the aid of a council was most acceptable to her, in the discharge of an office, with which was connected, not only her own happiness, but also a higher object—the happiness of a great, loyal, and affectionate people.'

As ministers considered it their duty to proceed

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with all practical despatch, lord Camden moved in the house of lords, on the thirty-first, that letters patent should be issued, under the great seal, empowering certain commissioners to open and hold the king's parliament at Westminster. The arguments already adduced by both parties were now repeated; and the names being read, those of the prince of Wales, and the dukes of York, Gloucester, and Cumberland, were found at the head of the commission: the duke of York, therefore, whose views on this subject coincided with those of the opposition, rose and said, that from want of knowledge, he had been unable to take any steps to prevent his nomination: not wishing, however, to stand on record, and to be handed down to posterity, as approving such an unconstitutional and illegal measure, he could not sanction the proceedings by his name; the omission of which, as well as that of his brother the prince of Wales, he now requested: the duke of Cumberland also made the same demand, on behalf of himself and the duke of Gloucester; and the names of these princes were accordingly left out of the letters patent. The resolution being carried, was on the second of February adopted by the commons; in consequence of which the lord chancellor affixed the great seal to a commission for opening parliament; and on the third, the commissioners laid before both houses the causes of their present meeting, and the objects which required their deliberation.

Improve-
ment of
the king's
health.

During these proceedings, the king's disorder was gradually subsiding, and the public had the satisfaction of receiving more favorable accounts of their sovereign in the daily bulletins of his physicians. A great variety of opinions prevailed at this time respecting his majesty's ultimate recovery: some persons affected to think that the malady would continue through life, or be succeeded by a state of incurable fatuity; many, even among his medical attendants, believed his recovery to be still distant; and others feared, that, even should the malady be removed, a considerable time must elapse before he could undertake the anxious cares of his high station, without the hazard of a

relapse: few were sanguine enough to think that no regency would be requisite. Mr. Pitt indeed himself was inclined to entertain such an expectation,¹³ in which he was encouraged by the judgment of Dr. Willis, who both now, and at all times, during his majesty's illness, was strongly opposed in opinion to Dr. Warren: after minute inquiry, however, and impartial reflection, the minister was convinced that his majesty's progress in amendment was not rapid enough to justify him in stopping measures for the appointment of a regent; consequently he presented his bill to the house of commons on the fifth of February, authorising the prince of Wales to exercise the whole royal authority, and to perform every act of government, subject to the three restrictions already mentioned; while the care of his majesty's person was assigned to the queen, assisted by a council: it also contained provisions for the resumption of the regal power, in case of the king's recovery.

This bill was read a second time on the sixth, after a few observations from Mr. Burke; but the evil star of the opposition was still in the ascendant: the measure was four days in passing through the committee; almost every article being warmly contested on the same ground as when the resolutions were discussed. On the third reading, a clause was introduced, limiting the restriction relative to the creation of peers to a term of three years; and the bill passed the commons on the thirteenth. Still improvement in his majesty's health advanced without interruption, and of course Mr. Pitt became more sanguine in his hopes: however, he thought it right to let the proceedings go on; and the bill being carried to the upper house on the thirteenth, produced a general notion that the regency would unquestionably take place: indeed, it was openly declared that arrangements were made for a new administration, in which the duke of Portland was to be first lord of the treasury, Mr. Fox secretary of state, and earl Spencer lord-lieutenant of Ireland; but two months had been

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¹³ Tomline, vol. ii. p. 474.

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thrown away, during which this new administration might have been appointed: and now a sudden termination of all their hopes and designs was at hand.

On the nineteenth, after the bill had been read a second time in the upper house, the lord chancellor from the woolsack intimated that his majesty's progress toward convalescence had been so regular, and recent intelligence from Kew was so favorable, that it would be indecorous to proceed in the present measures; nor had he any doubt, but that the house, participating in the general happiness of his majesty's subjects, would consider it absolutely necessary to wait a few days before they went farther with the bill: he accordingly submitted to their lordships the propriety of the committee adjourning to the twenty-fourth: such intelligence was received with general satisfaction; and the proposed adjournment took place.

The Irish parliament seized this opportunity of exercising that independent power which it had so recently established, by adopting a plan totally opposite to what had been sanctioned in the British senate. A motion, supported by Mr. Grattan, was carried without a division, for presenting an address to the prince of Wales; requesting him to assume the government of Ireland during his majesty's incapacity, with full powers of the executive branch: a similar measure was carried in the house of peers; and on the nineteenth of February, a deputation of lords and commoners waited on the lord-lieutenant, in order to forward the address through his hands: his excellency however declared, that consistently with his impression of duty, and the oath which he had taken, he could not present an address to his royal highness, inviting him to undertake the government of that realm, before he should be enabled to do so by law; it was therefore resolved in both houses to appoint a committee of two peers and three commoners, to carry their intentions into effect: these delegates accordingly set out for England; but auspicious events rendered the object of their undertaking nugatory.¹⁴

¹⁴ Had it not been for this fortunate circumstance, some politicians thought

On the twenty-third of February, the day before that to which the house of peers had adjourned, Mr. Pitt, who was dining with lord Chesterfield, received a letter from the king, written in his own hand, and announcing his recovery: the epistle was short; but it expressed his majesty's great satisfaction at the idea of a renewed intercourse with his minister after its long suspension, and of restoring the functions of his government; for which purpose Mr. Pitt was requested to confer with the lord chancellor, and to visit the king next day at Kew.

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Recovery
of his
majesty.

On the twenty-fourth, the chancellor informed the lords that he had been admitted to several interviews with his majesty, and had a conference for an hour with him that very day; also that his majesty's mind was clear, and his conceptions distinct; so that he appeared capable of conversing on any topic: under these circumstances, several adjournments of the peers took place, as well as of the commons, to whom similar information was imparted by the minister. At length, conformably to notice, a commission under the great seal was read to the two houses, on the tenth of March, authorising the commissioners previously appointed by letters patent for opening the parliament, to declare certain additional causes for holding the same; after which the chancellor observed, that his majesty being, by the blessing of Providence, recovered from his afflicting malady, had commanded him to convey to parliament his warmest acknowledgements for the proofs they had given of affection to his person, of zeal for the honor of his crown, and concern for the security and good government of his dominions; doubting not but that the late serious interruption of public business would afford additional incitement to apply themselves, as soon as possible, to the different objects of national concern which required their attention. Notice also was taken of the Prussian alliance; and the commons were informed that the estimates of the current

that by Mr. Pitt's measures the connexion between England and Ireland might have been broken, from the regency of each kingdom becoming a distinct and separate power.

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year would be immediately laid before them. An address of congratulation and thanks to his majesty was passed by the lower house without a dissentient voice; and the same unanimity prevailed regarding a motion for a message to the queen, congratulating her on an event in which she was so peculiarly interested. Actuated by that religious principle which formed a distinguishing part of his character, the king determined to return public thanks to Almighty God, in the cathedral of his metropolis, for the mercy which had been vouchsafed to him: accordingly, on the twenty-third of April, which was appointed to be held as a day of public thanksgiving throughout the realm, his majesty, attended by the queen and royal family, the two houses of parliament, and all the great officers of state, judges, and foreign ambassadors, repaired in procession to St. Paul's. He entered at the west end of the church, where a military band was stationed, which played appropriate music, until he reached the area under the great dome: it then ceased; and the organ, accompanied by the voices of above 5000 children of the charity schools, placed on circular seats gradually rising between the pillars, burst forth in that simple but sublime melody, the hundredth psalm: the king was evidently affected; and, turning to the bishop of Lincoln, near whom, as dean of the cathedral, he was walking, said with great emotion, 'I now feel that I have been ill.'¹⁵ He then stopped; but soon recovering himself, proceeded to the choir, where the humility with which he at first knelt down, and the fervor with which he appeared to pour forth the thanksgivings of a grateful heart to the supreme disposer of life and death, made a deep impression on the minds of those who beheld him. In the evening, a general illumination and other demonstrations of joy took place, not only in the metropolis, but in every town, and almost every village of the realm: grand galas, concerts, drawing-rooms, and visits to the theatres followed his majesty's recovery; nor, amidst the general exultation, did the steady,

¹⁵ Tomline, *Life of Pitt*, vol. ii. p. 488.

consistent, and constitutional conduct of Mr. Pitt remain unacknowledged: it would indeed be difficult to cite a period in our annals, when any king was more generally revered by his people, or any minister stood higher in the confidence both of the sovereign and the public. In a conversation, which his majesty held soon after his convalescence with Mr. justice Hardinge, he greatly commended the conduct of the house of commons in regard to the regency question; adding, that his illness had eventually been a great source of happiness to him, as proving 'how nobly the people would support him when he was in trouble.'

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CHAPTER XXXII.

GEORGE III. (CONTINUED.)—1789.

Plan of fortifying the West Indian islands adopted—Shop tax repealed—Mr. Beaufoy's motion respecting the corporation and test acts—Lord Stanhope's to repeal the penal laws—Mr. Wilberforce's motion for the abolition of the slave trade—Debates on it in the house of commons—Opinions in the country at large—Sir William Dolben's bill renewed—Lord Sidney resigns his office of secretary of state—Mr. Grenville succeeds him—Mr. Addington elected speaker—Mr. Pitt's financial scheme for the year—Finances of the East India Company, &c.—Affairs in the impeachment of Warren Hastings—Prorogation of parliament—The royal family visit the southern coast—Return to Windsor, levees, &c.—State of affairs in the north of Europe, in the Netherlands, and in France.

Parliamentary proceedings.

ONE of the earliest subjects that engaged the attention of parliament, was a plan formed by the master-general of the ordnance for the fortification of the West Indian islands, which, after considerable discussion, was adopted: Mr. Fox also succeeded in his motion to repeal the shop tax, which was found to fall very heavily on the metropolis and other great commercial towns, where the rent of houses is necessarily high. On the eighth of May, Mr. Beaufoy again moved the repeal of the corporation and test acts; being strongly supported by Fox, who laid it down as an axiom in policy, that no human government has any jurisdiction over opinions, as such; more especially over religious opinions: when these produce acts injurious to society, the law knows how and where to apply the remedy. If the reverse of this doctrine were adopted; if the actions of men were to be prejudged from their opinions; the seeds of everlasting jealousy and distrust

would be sown; unlimited scope would be given to the malignant passions; each man would be incited to divine the sentiments of his neighbor, in order to deduce from them mischievous consequences, and thence prove that he ought to incur disabilities, be fettered with restrictions, and harassed with penalties: from such intolerant principles had flowed every species of party zeal, every system of political persecution, every extravagance of religious hate. There were many men, not of the establishment, to whose services their country had a claim: surely, such citizens might be permitted, without absurdity, to say;—though we dissent from the church, we are friends to the constitution; and on religious subjects are entitled to think and act as we please. Ought the country to lose the talents of such men; and his majesty be prevented from dispensing the favors of the crown, except to one class of his subjects? These acts, it was contended, had subsisted for more than a century: true; but with repeated suspensions: for the indemnity bills were, literally speaking, annual acts: where then would be the impropriety of suspending them by an act of perpetual operation? Let not Great Britain be the last to take advantage of the general progress of human improvement: indulgence to other sects, and a desire to promote charity and good-will, were the best proofs any religion could give of its divine origin.

The minister opposed this motion on the same ground as in 1787. In reply to Mr. Fox's assertions, he observed, that government had a right to prevent any civil inconvenience which peculiar opinions were likely to produce, without waiting till the inconvenience was actually felt: he considered the established church as a part of the constitution; and the acts in question as justifiable on the principle of self-defence: he spoke of the great tranquillity which reigned at present in respect to religious differences; and declared, that if any thing could interrupt the harmony which subsisted between sects that once contended with bitter animosity, it would be done by awakening competition,

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and rekindling those sparks of ancient animosity, which mutual forbearance had almost extinguished; the motion accordingly was negatived by a majority of twenty, the numbers being 122 and 102. A few days afterwards, lord Stanhope proposed a bill for relieving nonconformists from the operation of the penal laws, and allowing them free exercise of their faith in preaching and in writing; papists only being excepted, on account of their dangerous and persecuting principles. It was strongly opposed by the bench of bishops, as tending to unloose the very bonds of society, by substituting every species of fanaticism in the place of religious order and subordination; and by opening a door to licentiousness, and contempt of christianity, under pretence of establishing religious liberty. Dr. Horsley admitted the absurdity of some of our penal laws; but objected to this bill, as destructive to the church of England, and thereby tending to destroy the constitution, of which that church was a firm and useful ally. Lord Stanhope made a very indecorous reply to the right reverend bench;¹ and the bill was rejected at the second reading.

Slave trade
question.

By a vote of last session all consideration of the slave trade had been postponed to the present time; and now it was felt that the season was too far advanced for properly discussing so extensive and complicated a subject: the privy-council, however, had persevered in the investigation of facts, and presented a report to the house; on which Mr. Wilberforce founded twelve resolutions, the last of which was an inference from several that preceded it, showing that 'no inconvenience would arise from discontinuing the farther importation of African slaves: these resolutions he brought forward on the twelfth of May; and in his introductory speech, he treated the subject, first on the question of humanity, and next on that of policy. From evidence before the council, it appeared that the number of slaves carried away annually from Africa,

¹ 'If they would not suffer him,' he said, 'to load away their rubbish by cartfulls, he would endeavor to carry it off in wheel-barrows; and if that mode were resisted, he would take it away with a spade.'

on an average of four years, amounted to 38,000, chiefly brought from the interior of the country: they consisted of four classes; prisoners taken in war; persons seized for debt, or for crimes alleged or imputed; domestic slaves sold for the emolument of their masters; and persons made slaves by violence or fraud: the trade thus carried on had a necessary tendency to cause frequent and cruel wars; to produce unjust convictions and aggravated punishments for pretended crimes; to encourage fraud and oppression; and to obstruct the natural course of civilisation and improvement: in regard to policy, since Africa furnished many valuable articles peculiar to that quarter of the globe, and highly important to our manufactures, there might be substituted for the slave trade an extensive commerce, which would at once equal the profits of this traffic, and probably increase with the civilisation that would follow the abolition of so barbarous and depopulating a system. After dilating on the infectious distempers arising from the confinement of the negroes, their grievous sufferings on the passage from Africa to the colonies, the diseases which prevailed among them on their arrival, also the dissoluteness, and other causes, which prevented the natural increase of population among these wretched beings, he inferred, that if we obviated the causes which had hitherto obstructed the natural increase of negroes in our plantations, and established good regulations among them, no considerable or permanent inconvenience would arise from discontinuing their importation from abroad: 'but, at all events,' said Mr. Wilberforce, 'a trade founded in iniquity, and carried on with so many circumstances of horror, must be abolished, let its policy be what it will.' His mind had, indeed, been harassed with objections of the West Indian planters, who asserted that such a measure would be followed by the absolute ruin of their property: he could not, however, help distrusting their arguments: he could not believe, that the Almighty, who forbade the practice of rapine and bloodshed, had made those crimes necessary to the well-being of any

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part of his universe: he felt a confidence in that persuasion; he took the resolution to act on it; and light soon broke in on him: his suspicion was every day confirmed by increasing information; and he was enabled to prove by incontrovertible evidence, that the number of negroes in our colonies might be kept up without the introduction of recruits from Africa. 'Let us then,' said this truly christian orator, 'make such amends as we can, for the mischief we have done to that unhappy continent: let us put an end at once to this inhuman traffic, and stop this effusion of human blood. The true way to virtue is to avoid temptation: let us therefore withdraw from these wretched Africans those temptations to fraud, violence, cruelty, and injustice, which the slave trade furnishes: wherever the sun shines, let us go round the world with him, diffusing our beneficence; but let us not traffic, only that we may set kings against their subjects, and subjects against their kings; sowing discord in every village, fear and terror in every family; urging millions of our fellow creatures to hunt each other for slaves; creating fairs and markets for human flesh through one whole continent of the world; and, under the name of policy, concealing from ourselves all the base iniquity of such a trade.'

Having moved his resolutions, Mr. Wilberforce said that he did not wish the house to decide on them at that time, but should consider the debate as adjourned to some day in the following week.

Mr. Burke declared, that not only England, but all Europe was deeply indebted to the honorable mover, for exposing the iniquity of a traffic, 'which began with savage war, was prosecuted with unheard of cruelty, continued during the middle passage with the most loathsome imprisonment, and ended in perpetual exile and unremitting slavery.' Mr. Pitt also expressed warm approbation of the manner in which the subject had been brought before the house: as to the mode of abolition, they were not called on at present to discuss it; but he trusted it would not tempt foreign powers to supply our islands with slaves by a

clandestine trade: nevertheless, we must not be deterred by such fears from relinquishing so detestable a traffic, when convinced that it ought to be abolished; our language must be, that Great Britain had resources which enabled her to protect her islands, and prevent that commerce from being secretly carried on with them, which she had thought fit, for her own honor, to abandon: it was her duty to take the lead; and foreign nations might be induced to concur with her, either by negotiation, or by that effect, which the propositions, by being put on the journals, would in all probability produce.

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Mr. Fox expressed similar sentiments: he thought that a trade in human flesh was so revolting, as to be in the last degree infamous to the government which permitted it; he also thought that France, our great political rival, would catch a spark from the fire which illuminated this country, and run a race with us in promoting the ends of humanity.²

But though the two great political leaders were favorable to this humane design, no doubt existed that it would be met by a strong and determined opposition in other quarters; numerous petitions had been already presented against it, and others were in a state of preparation: that powerful body of men, the West Indian merchants, and almost all persons connected with our colonial trade, felt persuaded that their interests would suffer by the success of Mr. Wilberforce's proposal: an immense property, situated in, and connected with the islands, belonged to members of both houses of parliament, and other persons of influence; much of this property was encumbered by mortgages and annuities, the owners of which were taught to believe that their securities would be deteriorated by an abolition of the slave trade: many also, thinking that the evils of this traffic were exaggerated, or might be mitigated, urged in its favor the plea of long-established practice, the sanction of the legislature,

² Subsequent events have shown how utterly mistaken he was in the sentiments of the French nation on this subject: yet even in France there is a large and noble party zealously employed in the righteous cause of abolition.

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the loss of national commerce that would ensue, and the danger of introducing a compulsory system in the management of private property: it was, besides, strongly contended, that, in a question of such importance, it would be improper to rely wholly on a report of the privy-council; and that the house ought to have an opportunity of forming its own judgment from evidence at its bar: this was thought to be a reasonable demand; and permission was granted for counsel to be heard, and witnesses examined: accordingly, a committee of the whole house sat for this purpose, every vacant day, from the twenty-seventh of May to the twenty-third of June; when such little progress was made, that both parties consented to defer the business till next session: this induced Sir William Dolben to bring in a bill for continuing the act of last year, which regulated the transportation of slaves from Africa to the colonies; and which was the more necessary, as the mortality in the middle passage was shown before the privy-council to be far greater than he had then stated it. This act passed; to remain in force till August, 1790.

Financial
measures of
Mr. Pitt.

In the beginning of June, lord Sidney resigned the office of secretary of state for the home department, to which Mr. Grenville was appointed; and Mr. Henry Addington was elevated to the speaker's chair: on the tenth, Pitt opened to the house his financial scheme for the year: the permanent income declared necessary by the committee of 1786 to defray the annual demands, was £15,500,000: for the last two years it had exceeded that sum by £78,000; but the expenses of the preceding year, the armament, the discharge of the prince of Wales's debts, sums granted to American loyalists, and other contingencies, had greatly exceeded the usual peace establishment: from these causes, the total amount of supplies required for the current year amounted to £5,730,000, beside the annual renewal of exchequer bills: to provide for this, in addition to the usual resources, a loan of £1,000,000 would be necessary; which he proposed to borrow on a tontine, or a scheme of life annuities with the benefit

of survivorship, the payment of which would cease in due time: as the necessity for this loan arose, not from any decrease of revenue, but only from an increase of expenditure, the minister justly contended, that no argument could be deduced from it unfavorable to our national resources: to pay these tontine annuities, which he calculated at about £44,750; and also to supply a defalcation in the revenue, occasioned by a repeal of the shop tax,³ he proposed not to bring forward any new tax, but merely to make a small addition to existing taxes on newspapers, advertisements, cards, dice, probates of wills, horses, and carriages; none of which, he conceived, would press at all on the poor, or heavily on any class of persons.

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To increase the revenue by farther prevention of frauds, a bill was introduced and carried, transferring the duties on tobacco from the customs to the excise; for it appeared, on inquiry, that one-half of that article was obtained by smuggling; so that the revenue was defrauded to the amount of nearly £300,000: as loud a clamor was raised in this case, as when the alterations took place in the wine duties; and such an extension of the excise law was reprobated as unconstitutional, and opposed to British liberty: but trite declamation did not influence the minister; the principal objections of manufacturers and others engaged in the tobacco trade were obviated by modifications introduced into the bill; while in answer to the general outcry, it was observed, that the proposed measure would place only a small number of additional persons under the excise; most of them being already subject to it on account of other articles in which they dealt.

On the first of July, Mr. Dundas presented to the house a statement of the East India company's finances; whence it appeared, that their annual revenues, after defraying the expenses of the different settlements, amounted to £1,848,000; while the interest of their debt was £480,700, and the principal £7,604,000; so that the excess of revenue beyond the

³ This had produced in the last year £56,000.

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interest, to be applied for liquidation of the debt, was £1,367,300: a petition, grounded on this statement, was presented from the company, praying that they might be permitted to add £1,000,000 to their capital stock, to be subscribed by the present proprietors: this application was supported by Mr. Dundas; who affirmed, that on a supposition of the extinction of the charter in 1794, their effects in Europe would overbalance their debts by the sum of £350,000; while those in India would go with the territory, and be readily taken by any power into whose hands it might be transferred: a bill was therefore introduced for the purpose required, which passed both houses after a slight opposition.

Trial of
Warren
Hastings.

The trial of Warren Hastings proceeded at a very slow rate: the court was not reopened before the twentieth of April, when Mr. Burke brought forward a charge relative to the corrupt receipt of money; in the course of which, having occasion to make mention of Nuncomar, he observed that Mr. Hastings had murdered that personage by the hands of sir Elijah Impey. In consequence of this, major Scott presented a petition to the house of commons, in behalf of the governor-general; complaining that the managers, especially Mr. Burke, had last year introduced allegations against him wholly unconnected with the charges, and praying that the present accusation might be formed into a specific article, in order to give him an opportunity of refuting it; or that such other redress might be afforded, as should seem good to the house. This petition gave rise to some violent debates, which called for the interposition of the speaker; major Scott accusing Mr. Burke of deliberate, systematic, and intentional misrepresentation; while he, in return, asserted that the major was a libeller of the house, from which he ought long since to have been expelled; and that no credit was due to his assertions.

It was urged, that to receive this petition, would not only be inconsistent with the confidence reposed by the house in the managers, and weaken its authority

in the exercise of its inquisitorial rights, but would also have a bad tendency, by allowing an accused person to arraign the conduct of his prosecutors, and in turn to become their accuser: the petition was also represented as a design to disgust the managers, and cause them to abandon the prosecution: others, however, and particularly the minister, contended that it was totally unjustifiable in the managers to bring forward charges against Mr. Hastings not contained in the articles of impeachment; especially, if, as in the present instance, the unauthorised accusations implied more criminality than those articles themselves; that the house did not mean to charge Mr. Hastings with murder, when they voted that he should be impeached for bribery and peculation; that the charges were definite, and the managers bound to confine their efforts to substantiate the facts to which they referred, without digressing into extraneous and irrelevant subjects, in order to prejudice the court and injure the character of the accused. Nevertheless, Mr. Pitt thought that they ought not to take cognisance of what was said last session, but confine themselves to present allegations respecting sir Elijah Impey, against whom the house itself had declared there was no ground for a criminal accusation: the words spoken, therefore, appeared to him highly unbecoming, and worthy of censure; though he did not wish to go farther than was necessary in doing that justice to the accused, to which, although deservedly under prosecution, he thought him entitled: to finish this dispute, which lasted four days, the marquis Graham moved a vote of censure against Mr. Burke, as having spoken words which ought not to have been uttered: it was supported by Mr. Pitt; and though strenuously opposed by Mr. Fox and the other managers, was carried by a majority of 155 against 66. The session terminated on the eleventh of August, with a speech from the lord chancellor, in the name of his majesty, who, though he continued free from mental aberration, was too much indisposed to attend as usual to public business: accordingly, he spent the summer with his royal

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consort and family in a tour along the southern coast of Great Britain, visiting Southampton, Weymouth, and Plymouth; at which latter place they were splendidly entertained by the noble owner of Mount Edgecumbe. On the sixteenth of September, the royal party returned to Windsor, when the health of his majesty appeared to be completely restored, and he entered into his customary pursuits and amusements with increased satisfaction: on the twenty-third the king held a levee for the first time since his indisposition; and on the eighteenth of November their majesties went to Covent Garden theatre with the three eldest princesses: also, on the sixteenth of December, they visited Drury Lane; being in both instances received by their subjects with the most enthusiastic cheers.

Continental
politics.

At this period, while England enjoyed complete repose, flourishing in arts, and prosperous in commerce, war and anarchy were disturbing a large portion of the continent, and preparing to strip its diadem from the brow of royalty. In the preceding year, the king of Sweden, offended at the intrigues of Russian emissaries, jealous of the aggrandisement of the ambitious czarina, and anxious to recover some portion of that territory which had been wrested from his predecessors, had commenced a war with Russia. He endeavored, in vain, to draw the Danes into an alliance; for they were engaged by treaty to assist the Russians, if the latter should be attacked by the Swedes: he was supported, however, by a subsidy from the Turkish sultan, whose power was seriously threatened by the combined arms of two imperial courts; and he entertained hopes of assistance from Great Britain and Prussia, whose activity was roused by the ambitious views of this northern confederacy, and by the distresses of the Ottoman Porte. Without engaging directly in the contest, they encouraged diversions both in Poland and Sweden; and when affairs began to assume an unfavorable aspect for the Swedish monarch, they offered their mediation between the courts of Petersburg and Stockholm; but this was rejected by

Catharine. Their next step was to intimidate the prince of Denmark, who governed the state for his incapable father; and Mr. Elliott, our envoy, acted on this occasion with becoming spirit; menacing the Danes with a combined attack from the Prussian army and British fleet, if they should persist in their hostilities against Sweden: the prince at first resented this interference; but at length, with the consent of the czarina, he promised to abstain from hostilities: great efforts were made to bring the Turkish war to a conclusion, both by England and Prussia; an alliance between this latter power and the Porte was concluded early in the following year, and a Prussian army was assembled in Silesia. The death of that mischievous sovereign Joseph II. and the disturbed state of his dominions, strengthened hopes of pacification: the congress at Reichenbach was opened in June, 1790, and a truce ensued between Austria and the Porte; though a conclusion of the definitive peace was delayed, on account of some intermediate events and modifications, till the middle of the following year. The negotiation with Russia was attended with greater difficulties; Catharine, already reconciled with Sweden, was not pleased with the high tone, which Prussia, and especially Great Britain, adopted, in prescribing to her terms of the *status quo*. In vain did the English minister, amid national murmurs, equip a fleet: Catharine declared her resolution to conclude the peace alone; and she did so: thus, after four years of contest, the Ottoman power remained firm on its basis, though the war was replete with consequences: the most important of these was the establishment of the dominion of Russia on the Black Sea, where Cherson and Odessa were founded by Catharine, not so much for herself as for future generations.

While the Austrian emperor had been prosecuting victories and conquests, from which he could derive no permanent advantage, he contrived to alienate from himself the affections of the most useful and industrious portion of his subjects. The people of the Netherlands had been among the earliest of the Euro-

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pean states to cultivate agriculture, commerce, and manufactures; whence arose a considerable degree of political liberty: they consisted of independent states, resembling each other in manners, character, and constitution of government; their polity being composed of three orders, clergy, nobles, and people, under the limited principality of one personage denominated count. Strongly attached to their ancient religion, and holding with intense faith the most extravagant tenets of the Roman church, they also manifested a warm affection to their sovereign princes, especially those of the house of Austria; and this they abundantly showed during the distresses of Maria Theresa, by the resources of money and troops, with which they liberally supplied that princess: nor did they cease to cherish the same sentiments toward her son; until the restless spirit of innovation, which distinguished his character, interfered with their ancient privileges and religion;—two objects, of which the Netherlands were peculiarly tenacious.

A violent desire of change, though it may at first veil itself under the respectable name of reform, is too apt to degenerate into a despotic spirit of rapacity and usurpation: this soon appeared in the conduct of the emperor Joseph; who, beginning with innovations in the ecclesiastical establishments, soon attacked their revenues; and having suppressed the most venerated judicial institutions, proceeded to appoint new tribunals, whose proceedings were marked with the secrecy of despotism: in addition to this, the legislature itself was subverted by a new edict; and the whole power of the assembly of states being abrogated, a council of general government was instituted, as a political engine of the court minister placed at its head. While the people were justly indignant at the daring violation of that convention, by which alone the archduke of Austria held the sovereignty of the Netherlands, the despotism of Joseph urged him to trample still farther on the constitution of this portion of his dominions; for not content with having abolished the judicial courts and legislative assembly, he now attacked the

clerical order; not, as before, by suppressing certain fraternities, least essential to the church; but by overthrowing those institutions which were the very nursery of its priesthood. The principal university in the low countries was that of Louvain, the most celebrated seat of catholic theology, and most highly prized by the zealous votaries of the Roman church: but its colleges were abolished, and its privileges abrogated by an edict, requiring all youths designed for the priesthood to pursue their studies in a general seminary, under a new system, from which native teachers were excluded: such a violation of the ecclesiastical constitution was warmly opposed both by the hierarchy and the people; strong remonstrances were made; and when the assembly of the states met, they refused to grant any subsidies, unless national grievances were redressed. The ferment at length became so vehement and so general, that concessions were made by the public authorities; and a decree was issued, promising full reparation, which for a time diffused joy among all classes; until it was interrupted by a refusal of the emperor's ratification, and an order that the different states should send deputies to Vienna, to lay their complaints at the foot of the throne. To prevent matters, if possible, from coming to an extremity, the states submitted to this requisition, though they entrusted very limited powers to their deputies: even while these were on their journey, large bodies of imperial troops were marched toward the Netherlands;—a measure, which contributed to agitate, without depressing the minds of the people, who resolved to maintain their liberties at every hazard: and to this issue the contest soon came; for, after pretending to adopt a moderate system of conduct, until the Flemings had disbanded their militia, the emperor suddenly changed his tone; and, having removed the count Murray, whose conciliatory conduct had rendered him a favorite with the people, he appointed another commander in chief, who had no local connexions in the Netherlands: this was general Dalton, an Irish soldier of fortune, whose principle of

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conduct was direct obedience to his master's orders, whatever those might be, or whatever rights they might violate: he had been previously employed against the rebellious mountaineers of Transylvania, and was noted for the disgraceful inhumanity with which he had treated his captives. The dictatorial conduct of this officer, and especially his menaces against the university of Louvain, soon produced a collision between the military and the citizens: blood was shed; and the act received marked approbation from Joseph, at the very time when, with flagrant duplicity, he was setting forth his tender affection for his subjects, and his desire of satisfying all their wishes: the interpreter, however, of that affection was the inexorable Dalton, who proceeded to establish the new seminary of Louvain at the point of the bayonet; and the admission of the imperial professors was celebrated by the murder of many inhabitants. At Malines and Antwerp the massacres were still more extensive; and personal safety was deemed so precarious in the Netherlands, that numerous persons of rank and property sought it in exile: confiscation, despotism, and military execution being once established, property, liberty, and life became so insecure, that men withdrew their capital from manufactures and commerce, to vest it in foreign funds; so that trade became stagnant; the revenue proportionably decreased; and the states of Brabant, under the atrocious tyranny which prevailed, determined to withhold their supplies. Such was the situation of affairs at the end of 1788.

Early in the present year, the emperor published an edict, annulling all former concessions, restoring every obnoxious establishment, and even recalling his inaugural oath. The grand council of Brabant having refused to sanction so despotic an act, that constitutional tribunal was suppressed; the management of the revenue, which had formed one of its departments, was vested in a commission; the appointment of abbots, who represented the chief order of the state, was prohibited; the commons were ordered to

be remodelled; the right of granting subsidies was to be taken from the states; and the celebrated charter, called the 'joyous entry,' to be annulled. A considerable part of the year was employed in executing these weak and wicked projects of infatuated ambition: his enmity to the clergy, and his rapacious love of money, now urged the emperor to the most extensive and systematic schemes of pillage; for by one decree he sequestered all the abbeys of Brabant, and appropriated their revenues to his own use.

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Such a violation of the rights of property in a country which had long enjoyed a free constitution, and such an instance of sacrilege against a people so devoutly attached to their priesthood, excited resentment among the Flemings to the highest degree; and as there was a great resemblance in the conduct of Joseph and the minister of his arbitrary power, to that of his ancestor Philip and the duke of Alva; so a similar spirit of resistance was exhibited by the descendants of that brave people, who so nobly liberated themselves from an Austrian yoke in the sixteenth century. While the Flemish patriots were maintaining a close correspondence with the emigrants, and concerting together a scheme of open resistance, Dalton despatched a portion of his troops to seize every person suspected of disaffection; carrying the system of proscription and slaughter to a greater extent than ever, while Trautmansdorff, the civil governor, acted as a ready instrument of his oppression. A conspiracy to blow up the houses of these two tyrants with gunpowder, and open the gates of Brussels to the emigrants, in the month of August, being discovered, led to the infliction of summary punishment on multitudes, whether guilty or suspected; but about the middle of September, the duke d'Ursel, the prince d'Arenburg, and other nobles who had retired to Breda, being joined by the archbishop of Malines and most of the states of Brabant, declared themselves a legal assembly, and drew up a remonstrance to the emperor, asserting their rights, as well as their resolution to maintain them: and while they professed

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themselves ready to sacrifice life and fortune for a sovereign who should govern them constitutionally, they adjured him to spare them the cruel necessity of appealing to God and their own swords.

This declaration, instead of appeasing, only irritated the tyrant, who gave orders for increased severity, and the violence of military execution: the Belgians, therefore, seeing no hope of redress but in the sword, hoisted the standard of revolt in October; and a body of Brabanters, having drawn the imperialists who pursued them into the small town of Furnhout, obliged them to retreat with a loss of 700 men. Encouraged by this success, the other provinces took up arms, and joined their fellow patriots: in the beginning of November, the Austrian general Bender was repulsed from the town of Tirlemont, after an obstinate contest; the Netherlanders took confidence, and met their foe in the open field; where, having obtained a complete victory, they gained possession of Ostend, Bruges, and Louvain. Animated by these successes, they now assailed the strong city of Ghent; defeated the Austrians in its streets; and on the third day of attack, obliged the enemy, who had taken shelter in the barracks, to surrender; when the garrison in the citadel, finding their post no longer tenable, evacuated it, after enormous excesses, which they had been encouraged to commit by orders from the emperor. The reduction of this place was of great importance; since it enabled the states of Flanders to assemble in the capital of that province, for the purpose of legalising their proceedings, giving a form to their new constitution, and concluding a federal union with the other states: the emperor, however, when he knew the unexpected success which attended the revolters, endeavored to deceive them with hopes of redress; to which he added terrific menaces, in case he should be obliged to relinquish the conquests he was now prosecuting, and pour his triumphant armies into their country; but the Flemings had been too often deceived by Joseph, to put any trust in his professions or his promises; while their recent successes taught

them that they were no longer dependent on his power: on the twentieth of November, therefore, the states of Flanders seized on the sovereign authority in their province, to which, as they declared, the emperor had forfeited all right and title: they also passed a resolution to organise an army, and unite themselves with the states of Brabant. Encouraged by these proceedings, the inhabitants of Brussels rose against their oppressors, and met with equal success: the savage Dalton, having retreated to the great square, was there obliged to capitulate, giving up the city on condition of being allowed to escape with his garrison; but Trautmansdorff and the other chief members of government withdrew to Liege. The Flemings, in their victories, imitated not the brutal conduct of the imperial troops; for they killed no one except in battle: having thus shown themselves worthy of success, and made themselves masters of the chief towns, they restored the ancient courts of justice, rescinded the emperor's innovating edicts, and settled the exercise of the sovereign power: the states of Brabant, being assembled at Brussels on the last day of the present year, bound themselves by oath to preserve the rights, privileges, and constitution of their country; and then administered the same oath to the members of council: the other provinces also, having respectively arranged their internal constitutions, with the exception of Luxemburg, formed themselves into a federal republic, by the title of the United Belgic States. Such was the result of the rapacity and usurpations of the Austrian emperor; and thus was the most important part of the continent prepared to meet the force of that revolutionary inundation, which was now rising to overwhelm the states of Europe: at the same time, we must not omit to notice, that a party existed in most countries, whose aim was to overturn the existing order of things: the efforts at revolution in several small states, such as Aix-la-Chapelle, and Geneva, which took place about this time, are so many instances of the democratic spirit which began to prevail; but the manner in which they were suppressed,

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Commence-
ment of the
French re-
volution.

though by armed mediation, gave evidence of the respect still entertained for the rights even of small states, and the efforts made to preserve the balance of European power.

All petty commotions, however, were soon lost in the eruption of that desolating volcano, whose throes began to be heard loud and deep in France, where we left prerogative vainly contending with the rising spirit of freedom, before which it was at length obliged to retreat. After the banishment of the duke of Orleans, and imprisonment of the abbé Sabatier and M. Freteau, who had vehemently opposed the royal edict, a series of remonstrances ensued from the parliament to the king, and of answers from his majesty; in which principles opposite to each other, in regard to the authority of the crown and the rights both of the parliament and the people, were so strenuously maintained, that any compromise or reconciliation was manifestly impossible; and it was obvious that some great crisis was fast approaching: the parliament constantly referred to the original constitution of the French kingdom; and the monarch appealed, in support of his claims, to the powers unquestionably exercised by his immediate predecessors. In order to relieve the king from these vexatious disputes, it was determined to hold a grand council, under the name of *la cour plénière*, possessing all the powers claimed by the parliaments; those assemblies being reduced to their original state of judicial courts: the plan, however, became divulged, and the parliament of Paris proceeded to pass a censure on its principles; when the king, indignant at being anticipated, ordered the arrest of the two principal speakers, d'Espremenil and Mosambert, who took refuge in the assembly, which speedily drew up a remonstrance against their seizure: the answer sent was a regiment of soldiers, who surrounded the house and demanded the persons of the refractory members; but the president declared that they must seize the whole assembly, for all there were d'Espremenils. The house having been thus besieged, as it were, for nearly a day and a night, the two

members in question rose and entreated that they might have liberty to surrender themselves; on which, they were taken into custody, and committed to prison.

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The king now reverted to what was manifestly a hopeless expedient, a bed of justice; and the parliament again protested against the *cour plénière*, as opposed to the rights of the nation, declaring that none of its members would accept a seat in it: this protest was followed by dissuasive letters from a portion of the nobles and bishops; so that the court became alarmed, and the design was abandoned: terror now pervaded all the departments of government; while the archbishop of Toulouse fled before the storm which he was unable to allay, and took refuge in Italy. The king, harassed by the failure of all his designs, and forsaken by the minister who had brought him into his present state of embarrassment, was driven to adopt a total change of measures, and to recall the popular Neckar, as well as to restore the parliament; when the latter instantly burned the royal decrees for its suspension, in the presence of the populace. It has been observed in a clever periodical work,⁴ that 'Neckar was a man made for national ruin: a charlatan, a *philosophe*, and a dealer in the stocks, he was a champion of that public confusion of interests which had made his fortune; a professor of that burlesque on science, political economy, which had enabled an obscure Swiss to talk of modelling governments, and to be an aspirant after those political honors which are to be secured by popular corruption. The rabble every where are rapid calculators; the French rabble the most rapid of all: they saw that Neckar had raised wealth out of nothing, and they took it for granted that the discoverer of this secret was the true financier for France; while he, whose folly alone palliated his crime, had the vanity to think that he was formed to be a statesman, and undertook the task; he pronounced that the age of universal restoration was at hand, called the whole tribe of philosophic rebels to his aid; and with loyalty

⁴ Blackwood's Magazine.

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on his lips, but ambition at his heart, again summoned the notables, and through them the states-general.'

This assembly was harmless in its original formation, consisting of 300 members from each order of the realm, nobles, clergy, and commons, who sat in separate chambers, and were a check on the proceedings of each other: the notables, who met on the sixth of November, 1788, recommended such an arrangement to be adopted in the present instance; but the king was unfortunately prevailed on by Neckar to summon 600 of the *tiers état*, or commons, making that body numerically equal to the other two, while the edict was silent as to their sitting in distinct chambers; from which silence a total corruption of the assembly followed.

Meeting of
the states-
general.

The states-general met on the fifth of May, in the present year, at Versailles; when the first act of the commons was to demand that the other two orders should join them in one chamber. Thrown into consternation by this proposal, the nobles and the clergy refused compliance; and their refusal was interpreted as an insult against the majesty of the people: in the mean time, all public business was at a stand; until the *tiers état*, finding the popular cry strongly in their favor, declared themselves the real representatives of the nation; and intimating that they were about to assume an exclusive power of legislation, sent a message to the other orders, requiring their attendance as individuals. Intimidated by harangues in the assembly, and the lively interest thereby excited in Paris, some of the nobles and clergy now joined the *tiers état*; the junction was hailed as a victory; and the members thus united declared themselves the *legislature*, remodelled the house, and, taking the name of the National Assembly, virtually assumed the government of the country. A few days after this decree, the king in person proposed to the States, as he still denominated them, a plan for a new constitution; declaring, among other regulations, that no new tax should be proposed, no money borrowed without their consent; that all exemptions from the payment of taxes, all

oppressive rights and services, should cease; that personal freedom should be secured, provincial states established, and justice administered both in civil and criminal courts with strict impartiality; in short, he proposed such a reform, as at an earlier period would probably have satisfied the great bulk of the nation, and put an end to future dissensions; but being unsuited to the views of those who were now masters of the assembly, was rejected with disdain.

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A majority of the clergy, and many of the nobles, having joined the *tiers état*, the remaining members of those orders, at the earnest desire of the king himself, followed their example on the twenty-seventh of June: this compliance, intended for the purpose of conciliation, only imparted additional influence to the revolutionary faction: 'the family was united,' as Bailly observed; 'but it gave few hopes of domestic union or tranquillity.' The truth of this soon appeared in the decrees proceeding from that legislative body, totally at variance with institutions existing from time immemorial, and which were considered only as preparatory steps to the establishment of a new system of government: as the ground work of such a system, the national assembly published, at the end of August, a declaration of the rights of men and citizens, utterly inconsistent, not only with monarchical government, but with the true end of all civil polity;—the security of individuals, and tranquillity of the public.

The proceedings at Versailles were encouraged and promoted by events at Paris; where the municipality, self-constituted from the electors of that city, raised its head, and, in common with many other clubs and societies, forwarded an address of congratulation to the national assembly: the Palais Royal now began to exhibit scenes of gross disorder; seditious assemblies and journals were daily multiplied; declaimers harangued in every street; and the lowest classes imbibed freely the intoxicating spirit of politics: the triumph of the *tiers état* had suspended the action of all law; and a pretext alone was required to produce open insurrection, with an essay of arms: this was not long

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Disturb-
ances at
Paris.

wanting; for when the moral power and influence of government is defeated, it may expect to be soon driven to a trial of its physical force.

A short time previously to the open exhibition of popular discontents, the household troops had been disbanded; whilst orders were issued, prohibiting the advancement of any one, save a noble, to the rank of officer; and the severities of the Prussian discipline were introduced into the ranks of the French army: the soldiery, therefore, became almost as prone to insubordination as the people: on the last day of June, 300 of the French guards quitted their barracks, and visited the Palais Royal, where they were received with exultation: being placed in confinement on returning to their quarters, the populace broke in, and set them at liberty. This was the first triumph of the mob; foreign troops were in the mean time pouring into Versailles; and the count d'Artois, with his friend, the baron de Breteuil, undertook the task of stopping the march of revolution: in this project, he had the countenance of the queen, whose indignation prompted her to commend decisive measures, when taken up too late, and by the most imbecile agents. On the eleventh of July, this party had overcome the king's scruples; Neckar was dismissed, and Breteuil succeeded him in the ministry; but the court was anticipated in a recurrence to force, which would have been now too late if employed for the sake of monarchy. On the day after Neckar's dismissal, Camille Desmoulins, a low demagogue of the Palais Royal, made this the desired pretext for exciting the Parisian mob: as he was leading them in procession, with the busts of Neckar and the duc d'Orleans, crowned with laurel, they encountered a German regiment; blows and shots were exchanged; a soldier of the royal guards was said to have fallen in the ranks of the people; for which cause, and from previous jealousy, a large body of guards issued from their barracks, and fired on the foreign troops; the Germans returned it, and dispersed the mob: they then retired, with a desire of sparing farther effusion of blood; but were followed by the populace, uttering

cries of vengeance, and hastening in search of arms: the shops of the gunsmiths were immediately plundered; and the Hotel de Ville, where the electors sat as a self-constituted municipality, delivered up all that were kept in that establishment, while the enrolment of a civic guard was ordered; a vain and late attempt to separate the armed citizen from the armed ruffian: in the mean time, the national assembly, instead of assuming to itself the power which it had so fiercely claimed, and proclaiming itself the defender of a constitution of its own making, exhibited nothing but timidity, and a mean-spirited adulation of the mob: it even went so far as to address the king for the purpose of dismissing his foreign regiments, and giving up Paris to the new civic army. The unfortunate monarch, startled by this apparent determination to overthrow his government, exhibited more than usual firmness, and rejected the proposal; but while this miserable and shrinking assembly was impelled by la Fayette to press it again on his acceptance, the multitude took the power into their own hands, and proceeded through Paris to the Hotel of the Invalids, where they obtained a supply of muskets, and, what was much more important, of artillery: thus provided, they marched to the Bastile; and if they had been content with leveling to the ground that odious den of arbitrary power, who could have blamed their impetuosity?

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Destruction of the
Bastile.

Not satisfied however with the capture of the fortress, and the murder of de Launy, its governor, in cold blood, they marched in triumph to the Hotel de Ville, where the municipality had chosen Hesselles, provost of the merchants, as their president; who weakly undertook to amuse them by a promise of arms, indicating at the same time where they might be found. Exasperated by finding this information false, they fell on the unfortunate magistrate; and, having severed his head from the body, carried it, together with that of de Launy, in barbarous triumph through the streets.

In the mean time, where was the count d'Artois and Breteuil, with their bold projects? Louis saw at once

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their weakness and incapacity: abandoning, therefore, the counsels of such men in disgust, he hurried to the assembly, to declare his sincere cordiality with it, and to crave its support in the restoration of tranquillity; at the same time announcing that orders were given to remove all foreign troops from the capital. Seeing the popular party thus victorious, the count d'Artois, the prince de Condé, the Polignacs, and many other inveterate courtiers, took their departure from France, as precipitate to fly as they had been tardy to act.

The national assembly, being thus master of the sovereign, sent a deputation, to thank the Parisians, and to reorganise the authorities of the capital: Bailly, a man of letters and of integrity, headed this deputation, and was chosen to preside over the municipality, as mayor of Paris; while la Fayette was appointed to command the armed force, miscalled a national guard; as it was chiefly composed of disbanded soldiers: the Parisians were then told that Louis was cordially united with the national assembly: 'he has been hitherto deceived,' said the deputies; 'but he now sees the merit and justice of the popular cause.' The enthusiasm which this explanation caused was general, but transient: the suspicions of the populace soon returned; and in a few hours they recommenced their clamors, demanding the presence of the king in his capital, to assure them personally of his intentions: Bailly, the new mayor, promised to do his utmost for their gratification; but he already perceived that some mysterious agent was at work, bribing and exciting the people to fresh acts of sedition: this was no other than the duke of Orleans, whom a party in the national assembly desired to place at the head of the new republican constitution as lieutenant-general of France: his nerve however was not found equal to this daring outrage; and he fled to England when the time approached for putting it into execution.

On the seventeenth, Louis anticipated the populace, who were desirous of carrying him to Paris, by stating his readiness to visit the capital: arrived at its gates, he was welcomed by the mayor in the following short

but pithy address, the antithesis of which contained a bitter truth:—‘I present to your majesty the keys of the good city of Paris; the same which were presented to Henry IV.: he reconquered his people; here the people have reconquered their king.’ After this there was a public procession, where all wore the tricolored cockade, which the king himself assumed cheerfully at the Hotel de Ville, and requested the mayor to state in his name to the municipality, that he heartily approved of their acts. After this adhesion to the principles of the revolution, the unfortunate monarch hastened to Versailles; rejoicing to escape from his capital, and the fraternity of its ruffian populace.

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In the mean time, famine had been adding its horrors to the scene: Foulon, superintendent of the revenue, a detested member of a detested profession, was seized by the people, who dragged him to the Hotel de Ville, urging his condemnation with the most violent exclamations: in vain the municipality declared they were not a court of justice; in vain did they enter into the form of a trial in order to gain time; in vain did la Fayette plead eloquently for his liberation: the rabble, impatient of delay, rushed into the hall, whence they tore their victim, and hanged him at a lamp-post: his son-in-law, Berthier, shared the same fate; and la Fayette threw up his command in disgust, but was persuaded to resume it.

On the fourth of August, the attention of the national assembly was turned to excesses committed by the lower orders in the provinces, after the example of the capital; when it was observed, that their resentment was justly called forth against the upholders of *taille* and *corvée*, and feudal abuses: on this, the count de Noailles moved to abolish *corvées*, and all other marks of personal servitude: the duc d’Aiguillon seconded him; and the highest nobles of the land came forward to sacrifice all their seignorial rights, jurisdictions, and immunities: the clergy followed this example; and in a moment of excitement, the proudest aristocracy, and the most unbending church in Europe, reduced themselves to a level with the people; giving up all those

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rights, to preserve which in their utmost plenitude, they had long risked, and now precipitated, the fall of the monarchy. Thus closed the first act of this celebrated tragedy, in the annihilation of those privileges and immunities which had so long weighed down the state, and which would have rendered a revolution unavoidable, even if other causes had not existed to produce a convulsion : it is not our province to write a regular history of this great event; but its effects had so extensive an influence on British policy, its causes were so variously interpreted, the actors and sufferers in its scenes bore such prominent parts in the annals of our times;—that it would be unpardonable to omit such a description of its progress, as may be necessary to throw light on British transactions; or such an investigation of its causes, as may help to guard posterity against a recurrence of its evils: considering, therefore, this event apart from those fears and prejudices which once disturbed the imaginations and distorted the ideas of almost all who described it; casting aside the views of party writers, among whom some extolled it as the acmé of human justice and divine retribution, while others reprobated every one concerned in its transactions as possessed with a demoniacal spirit of innovating fury or atheistical profanation; confessing that a revolution was desirable, though lamenting that it was accompanied by so dreadful a display of vice and profligacy;—we shall notice the causes of this political convulsion, as they are divided into three classes, remote, intermediate, and proximate. The first of these originated with the privileged orders and the monarch; and were such as must render a revolution inevitable in any country whatever, while human nature remains unchanged. Unfortunately for France, no institution existed, like our parliament, to assert the rights and keep alive the spirit of liberty in the middle ranks of society: the seignorial rights therefore of the *noblesse*, and the feudal burdens of the *bourgeoisie*, which were always more oppressive and extensive in France than in England, remained unbroken in the former country;

and continued to be exercised and exacted, even when commerce, riches, and civilisation had qualified the commons to demand a larger share of political importance: this evil was rendered intolerable by a power which the monarch possessed of imposing taxes on the people by his sole authority, and of granting exemptions from their operation by patents of nobility, sold for money, or annexed to employments: exemptions might have been suffered, if they had been confined to the few families of high nobility; but when by sale or improvident grants these privileged families became augmented to the number of 30,000, the distinction could be no longer endured. Intimately connected also with these causes of revolution, was a prevailing wish to destroy the power and wealth of a corrupt church: indeed, the immunities and privileges of the higher orders of ecclesiastics were little inferior to those of the nobles; and as all dignified and lucrative offices in the church, like the higher commissions in the army, were rigidly confined to the privileged class of nobility, popular envy produced popular hatred; so that nothing was contemplated with greater eagerness than the confiscation of ecclesiastical revenues. Such principally were the remote, but constantly increasing causes of the French revolution: among the intermediate ones, may be enumerated the ruinous wars of Louis XIV.: his expenditure in buildings, and other unnecessary works; his base expulsion of the protestants, and his unwise policy in bringing the nobility around his court: for though the feudal lord is the oppressor of his vassals, he often confers kindness on them: removed to court, he becomes known to them only through his agents; and while his oppressions are increased, his benefits are withheld. Nor must we forget the profligacy of Louis XV. and the reign of his mistresses; by which the expenses of the court and the necessities of government became so excessive, that it was found impracticable to raise the revenue without recourse to the meanest arts and the most oppressive exactions: in short, the finances verged on a state of ruin; while the vices of the monarch, imitated by his

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courtiers, and extending their influence in circles over the whole surface of society, produced corruption in the very heart and core of the nation.

In this state of things, numerous were the proximate and accelerating causes of national ruin. Philosophy, falsely so called, assailed the religion of the state; and finding the outworks which the national church had thrown around it weak and fragile, she soon demolished them, and stormed the citadel: thus the strongest support of civil polity vanished, and left the people a prey to faction, libertinism, and all the evils which unrestrained passions can produce: then came the American war; and the part which France took in it, was like that of a madman, who plunges a torch into a magazine of combustibles. When the French army returned from the colonies, its officers and men were inflamed by a knowledge and a love of liberty, which had never before existed in their native country; and the consequences were foreseen by all persons of discernment and reflection: clubs and societies for the dispersion of new doctrines and new sentiments were extensively formed; among the members of which, were found many, whose privileges were the grand object of attack, and who fell among the first victims of revolutionary caprice. In the mean time, the finances became more and more disordered; while the most incapable persons, and theorists of the most opposite opinions, were employed to restore them: these, after some ineffectual struggles, having quarrelled with the parliament, convened the notables, and attempted to make trial of a *cour plénière*, threw up the government in despair into the hands of the states-general: there, the commons, being superior in numbers, zeal, and intelligence to the privileged orders, drew these latter into the vortex prepared for them, and the revolution was complete: some blood indeed was then shed; but the abolition of privilege was the grand object aimed at. Whether, when this object was gained, and the king had accepted a new constitution, a farther effusion of blood, with all the horrors of revolutionary convulsion, might have been avoided,

and a constitutional monarchy, free from the abuses of the old system, established,—must now remain matter of conjecture; but historic truth obliges us to confess that few characters could have been found less adapted to cope with the awful circumstances of the times, than that of Louis XVI.; a monarch, too merciful and benevolent to adopt those measures of severity that were necessary to coerce his revolted subjects; too vacillating and insincere to command their respect and confidence: at the same time, he was peculiarly unfortunate in the partner of his throne: when Louis acknowledged the powers of the national assembly, and accepted the government established by them, he virtually relinquished the rights exercised by his immediate predecessors; but the restless and ambitious mind of Marie Antoinette, educated from early years in the principles of arbitrary rule, could never abandon the hope of re-establishing the old system: she vehemently urged her husband to restore it; and his efforts to effect her wishes were a violation of that faith which he had pledged, when he consented to retain his crown under the new constitution.

By that constitution, the privileges, exemptions, and immunities, which feudal times had attached to certain classes, were abolished; and the middle ranks, victorious in their struggle with the court and aristocracy, succeeded to the place which those classes once held in the state: at the same time, they succeeded, in great measure, to the difficulties and envy of their situation: Bailly and La Fayette were the representatives of their opinions; and for the present, held the executive, as it were, of the revolutionary realm: but already the artisans and working classes began to feel the weight above them, and to consider the simple burgesses, as aristocrats: at present, however, they were without leaders; and the existence of royalty averted for a time the struggles between the two parties.

A considerable interval elapsed without any flagrant acts of violence: the assembly was busy in fixing the

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basis of the new constitution, the municipality in procuring bread for the metropolis, and Neckar in expedients to raise money, when neither tax could be levied, nor loan procured: during this time, however, the courtiers recovered from their terrors, and the populace resumed its suspicion and impatience: each party entered into plans of its own; while the middle classes, together with the assembly, were destined to submit to that which should prove victorious: their leaders, indeed, made every exertion to preserve the tranquillity of the capital; but famine continued to prevail; the court was accused of augmenting it; and the cry of the people was, 'To Versailles: let us seek bread from the king!' This disposition of the populace was far from displeasing to the aristocratic party, who wished to drive the monarch into an open breach with the revolutionists; for they saw no hope except in civil war. M. de Bouillé, a noble, and a general beloved by his soldiers, commanded at Metz, an important city on the frontiers; and to him the thoughts of the queen and her counsellors were now turned as the restorer of the monarchy.

In the mean time came the deputation from Paris to the assembly; while the court, full of its warlike sentiments, brought the regiment of Flanders to Versailles, and surrounded itself with soldiers: the municipality of Paris became alarmed; la Fayette himself spoke openly of a plot against liberty; and the mob caught the suspicion. On the second of October, a *fête* was given by the body guards to the newly-arrived officers, and those of the national guard of Versailles: the soldiers were admitted, and wine was given them, in which they drank to the health of the queen and the king, while the banqueters pledged them with drawn swords: in the midst of these loyal effusions, Marie Antoinette appeared with the dauphin; and the most enthusiastic vows were repeated for the support of the royal cause.

A pretext for exciting tumult was now afforded to the agitators, both in the assembly, and at Paris: Petion, Robespierre, Gregoire, and other leaders of

the democrats gave vent to the most revolutionary language, beginning to accuse and threaten Mirabeau, the chief representative of the middle classes: the only hope then left for Louis was to have allied himself cordially with this latter party, while the ultra-revolutionists were yet powerless; but it was on this very day that he was advised to dissent from the vote of the assembly, and to reject their constitution. In the afternoon, the rabble of Paris, with a horde of monsters in the shape of women, reached Versailles; the well-known excesses took place at the palace, where the queen escaped midnight assassination only by the devotion of her body-guard; and la Fayette, by retiring to rest, when the person of his sovereign was committed to his care, fixed an indelible stigma on his own name: next day, the removal of the royal family to Paris was effected; and the heads of the unfortunate defenders of their monarch, fixed on pikes, adorned this procession of the *poissardes*: the imprudence of the courtiers served both as cause and pretext to a disaster, of which la Fayette and the assembly were mere spectators: they followed the king to Paris, where they kept themselves afloat with difficulty, and that only for a short time, amid the crimes, corruption, and terrors, in which the unfortunate capital was involved.

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CHAPTER XXXIII.

GEORGE III. (CONTINUED.)—1790.

State of parties at the breaking out of the French revolution, &c.—Meeting of parliament—Difference of opinion regarding events in France between Burke, Fox, &c., leading to a grand schism of the whigs—Quarrel between Burke and Sheridan—Motion to repeal the corporation and test acts rejected—Part acted by the dissenters in general polity—Mr. Flood's motion for a reform in parliament withdrawn—Scheme of finance—State of East Indian finances—Sums voted for services and losses—Evidence heard on the slave trade—Mr. Hastings's trial—Affair of Nootka-sound with the Spaniards—Session closes—Parliament dissolved—Affair of Nootka-sound adjusted—Comments on it in both houses—Proposed manner of meeting the expenses—Continental affairs—State of parties in England—Death of Howard the philanthropist.

State of
parties.

WE are now approaching the most awful period in the annals of the world. Storms had been long gathering in the political horizon, destined to try the strength of every institution raised by man; vast evils had been let loose on society; and the spirit of French anarchy went forth to revolutionise the world. The ensuing contest will be on a scale immeasurably greater than all which preceded it: we shall see, not armies against armies, but kingdoms against kingdoms; not merely empires, but continents convulsed; so that former strifes and struggles, victories and defeats, will appear, by the comparison, like the play of children.

The proceedings in France, which we have already narrated, could not fail to attract the anxious notice of other European states; especially those, to which emigrant nobles, who deserted their monarch in

distress, had carried all their ancient prejudices and exasperated feelings.

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In England most persons beheld the phenomena with pleasure; but some looked on them with suspicion and jealousy; others with anxiety and alarm: the greater part of those who rejoiced, concluded that a change from the old system of despotism must be an improvement; and trusted that the alterations would produce a government in France, similar to that which they themselves enjoyed: thus the generous feelings of Englishmen sympathised with the assertors of liberty, before they had time and opportunity to ascertain its effects on the character and situation of its new votaries: even statesmen of high rank and talent presumed that French liberty would render the people happy; and, imputing the frequent aggressions of France on this and other nations to the corrupt ambition of her court, they anticipated tranquillity from her renovated state, and rejoiced at a change which promised peace to Europe. But it is not to be disguised, that this country contained also a class of discontented speculative men, who had long considered England herself deficient in the liberty which their fancy represented as agreeable to men's natural rights, even in a state of civilised society: these persons admired the French legislators, who took the pole star of reason for their guide, in preference to the narrow and despised forms of precedent or authority; and who made that principle the basis of government, instead of modifying it according to the rules of expediency: nor were there wanting men of profligate lives and broken fortunes, who had long discarded all moral and religious principle from their souls; a desperate faction, anxious for the overthrow of government and the confiscation of property; in whose minds crime changed its nature; plunder becoming justice, treason patriotism, and the denial of a God the perfection of human reason.

At this alarming period, Englishmen experienced the blessing of an upright king and a virtuous aristocracy: when monarchy was denounced by their neigh-

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bors, they could turn to its representative among themselves, and see a standard of excellence, round which all ranks might rally: they could see him too in the midst of a court, as far removed from the gloomy fanaticism of the Escorial, as it was from the splendid debaucheries of Versailles.

This moral influence of the court was nobly aided by the vigor and policy of him who directed the helm of government. The wisdom of Mr. Pitt had removed the principal materials by which faction is nourished: for while he exhibited a readiness to reform abuses, and to uphold the principles of civil liberty; his financial skill, and the great reform which he had carried through every branch of revenue and expenditure, so increased the public resources, that commerce, trade, and agriculture were all flourishing; the burthens of the country were fast decreasing; and that immense debt which the late war had left, was in a fair way of being discharged. Up to this period, nay, up to that, when, impelled by external circumstances, he entered into war with republican France, and boldly linked the destinies of England with those of the continent, the character of Mr. Pitt will bear the strictest scrutiny; and it is grievous to think that its bright surface should afterwards have been stained by any unseemly spots. Surely, there must be something in the possession of power, which alters the nature of its possessor: otherwise, it is difficult to conceive, how the man, who began his ministerial career with such unflinching integrity, such a spirit of economy and reform; should have indulged in that reckless profusion of public money, the effects of which have since been so severely felt; that he should have relaxed in the prosecution of great principles, which he had formerly advocated with all the force of eloquence; that he should have employed the petty arts of parliamentary corruption, prostituted church patronage,¹ overloaded

¹ 'About a month before the death of the bishop of Carlisle,' says bishop Watson, in his Autobiography, 'a relation of sir James Lowther had preached the commencement sermon at Cambridge. Mr. Pitt happened to sit next me at church, and asked me the name of the preacher, not much approving his performance: I told him, report said he was to be the next bishop of Carlisle; and I

the country with placemen and sinecurists, and opened wide every channel of expenditure, for the purpose of securing that influence, which, being already based on a just and prudent policy, would certainly have been retained by the same independent line of conduct. Still, notwithstanding all this, when we reflect on the dangers from which the bold, energetic conduct of this minister rescued us at the out-breaking of the French revolution, and the policy by which he prepared the country to sustain a just and necessary war, the greatest ever waged by any nation, we must acknowledge that an immense debt of gratitude is due to the memory of Pitt.

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Parliament met on the twenty-first of January, 1790: in the royal speech, his majesty only glanced at the affairs of the continent, by observing that they had engaged his serious attention: but lord Valletort, in moving the address, took occasion to contrast the tranquil and prosperous state of this country with the anarchy and licentiousness prevailing in France; and to stigmatise the revolution as the most disastrous and fatal event to French interests, that had ever taken place since the foundation of its monarchy: the applause with which these sentiments were received by the greater part of the house, sufficiently indicated the opinion entertained of the late transactions by a majority of British senators: the subject was resumed in the debates which took place on the fifth and ninth of February, relative to the army estimates; when a

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begged him to have some respect to the dignity of the bench, whenever a vacancy happened: he assured me that he knew nothing of such an arrangement. Within two months after this, sir James Lowther applied to Mr. Pitt for the bishopric of Carlisle, for the gentleman whom he had heard preach; and Mr. Pitt without the least hesitation promised it. This was one of the many transactions that gave me an unfavorable opinion of Mr. Pitt.—I saw that he was ready to sacrifice things the most sacred to the furtherance of his ambition.'—p. 189. One of Mr. Pitt's great errors was a neglect of the church, which was not brought properly into contact with the population that so rapidly increased under his administration. Not a single new church was erected during the time that the population was doubling itself: thus a vast body of dissenters grew up; and their rights, though resisted, could not be defeated. The great extent of dissent arose, in a great measure, from want of a better distribution of church property and preferment. 'It is rare,' says an eminent divine, 'to find a minister, who can have the magnanimity to divest himself of political considerations in the discharge of a sacred trust placed in his hands for the good of the church—the distribution of the ecclesiastical patronage of the crown.'—Dr. Valpy's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 373, note.

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new champion of established rights arose, to denounce the French revolution in its origin, its conduct, and its ultimate aim; to renounce even his political connexions and his dearest friends in support of his opinions; to carry on, while life lasted, an interminable war against jacobinical principles; and, by laying before his countrymen the horrors of democracy, with unwearied energy, and a matchless extent of knowledge, to bear an illustrious part in the work of national preservation. It is scarcely possible to set a greater value than they deserve on the services rendered by this highly-gifted man to his country; when factious demagogues hailed the progress of revolutionary fury as the march of reason; professing to see nothing but illumination in the firebrand which France was waving over all the thrones of Europe; and nothing but an enthusiastic devotion to liberty in clamors for the confiscation of property, and the blood of its possessors. While the external acts of this dangerous faction were coerced by Pitt's energetic policy, the contagion of its principles was forcibly arrested by those splendid productions that issued from the pen of Burke; in which his fancy laid all nature under tribute, collecting treasures from every scene of creation, and from every walk of art, to adorn his pages. But though candor impels us to acknowledge the superlative merit of these compositions, as adapted to the purpose for which they were written; truth obliges us to confess that they contain sentiments and principles opposed to general happiness and to constitutional liberty. When Mr. Burke, in his exclusive sympathy for the fallen throne and ruined aristocracy of France, had no commiseration left for the people who had suffered so many accumulated evils under the subverted government, he laid himself open to the just rebuke of Paine, who exclaimed in metaphorical language, the beauty of which has rarely been surpassed, 'He pities the plumage, but forgets the dying bird.' Again, when he asserted, that man completely abdicates and surrenders all his natural rights by entering into society; and that the only rights which he retains are created

by the compact which holds together the society of which he is a member; the fallacy of his proposition was shown by sir James Mackintosh from the conclusions to which it leads: 'Civil inequalities,' said that acute reasoner, 'or, more correctly, civil distinction, must exist in the social body, because it must possess organs destined for different functions; but political inequality is inconsistent with the principles of natural right, and the object of civil institution: men retain a right to share in their own government, because the exercise of the right by one man is not inconsistent with its possession by another; which is evidently the only case where the surrender of a natural right can be exacted by society: the slightest deviation from this doctrine legitimates every tyranny: if the only criterion of governments be the supposed convention which forms them, all are equally legitimate; for the only interpreter of the convention is the usage of the government, which is thus preposterously made its own standard: if governors therefore abide by the maxims of the constitution which they administer, and tyrannise by precedent, in reverent imitation of the models consecrated by usage, there is no remedy for the oppressed; since an appeal to the rights of nature were treason against the principles of the social union. If, indeed, any offence against precedent be committed, this theory may, though most inconsistently, permit resistance; but as long as the forms of any government are preserved, it possesses, in a view of justice, whatever be its nature, equal claims to obedience.'²

The merit, however, and efficacy of Mr. Burke's writings were scarcely diminished by the few false principles with which they were interspersed. At the period of which we are treating, the constitution of a neighboring kingdom was in a state of conflagration,

² 'Mr. Burke's doctrines also,' says sir James, 'are virtually contradicted by the laws of all nations. Were his opinions true, the language of laws should be permissive, not restrictive. Had men surrendered all their rights into the hands of the magistrate, should he not announce the portion he was pleased to return them, not the part of which he is compelled to deprive them?'—*Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, p. 215.

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and our own was caught by the flames: who then can severely blame the man, who assisted in so eminent a degree to extinguish them, though he may have drawn from a stream that was not wholly free from impurities? The faithful historian, however, who is unshackled by the fetters of party, will not be deterred, by the sanction of a great name, from pointing out any principles, from whatever quarter they may proceed, which appear dangerous to the constitutional fabric.⁸ Even in the present times, the democratic spirit is abroad; but it is not to be repressed by opposing to it privileges and prerogatives made for the sole benefit of the few: indeed, the persevering attempts to uphold obsolete and unjust rights chiefly provoked those encroachments which have been so much complained of; and if it were possible, in the present state of knowledge, to choke the expression of popular sentiments for a time, what would be the consequence? the disgorged matter, cast down the volcanic abyss, would soon be returned with a terrible explosion. Changes in government are rendered necessary by the progress of time and intelligence; and although resistance to change is useful, in preventing the machine of government from attaining too rapid a motion; yet that resistance ought to be founded on right principles; not such as a peculiar class of politicians have endeavored to draw from the writings of Mr. Burke.

In the first of the debates already alluded to, on the fifth of February, Mr. Fox, whose ardor in the cause of liberty was not always accompanied with sound judgment, had the temerity, while panegyrising the French revolution, to pronounce a direct eulogy on the revolt of the guards: this was met, at the time,

⁸ That these views of Mr. Burke involved such principles, is the opinion of many men of high character and intelligence. 'It is pretended,' said the late Robert Hall, 'that the moment we quit a state of nature, as we have given up the control of our actions in return for the superior advantages of law and government, we can never appeal again to any original principles; but must rest content with the advantages that are secured by the terms of the society. These are the views which distinguish the political writings of Mr. Burke; an author, whose splendid and unequalled powers have given a vogue and a fashion to certain tenets, which from any other pen would have appeared abject and contemptible.'—*Apology for the Freedom of the Press, &c.*, 8vo edition, p. 52.

by a storm of reprobation from the insulted feelings of the house; but on the ninth, Mr. Burke particularly adverted to the danger of such opinions, sanctioned by the authority of so great a name: then, entering at large into the subject, he delivered the first of those splendid harangues, which were as the sound of a trumpet to the hearts of Englishmen. 'The French,' said he, 'have shown themselves the ablest architects of ruin that have hitherto appeared in the world: in one short summer they have completely pulled down their monarchy, their church, their nobility, their law, their army, and their revenue: were we absolute conquerors, with France prostrate at our feet, we should blush to impose on them terms so destructive to their national consequence, as the duration they have imposed on themselves: our present danger is that of being led from admiration, to imitate the excesses of a people, whose government is anarchy, and whose religion is atheism.' He declared his concern at hearing this strange thing, called a revolution in France, compared with the glorious event called the revolution in England; and then he instituted a parallel between the two; showing how thoroughly they differed from each other, and how Great Britain had risen beyond the standard of her former self, because she commenced with reparation, not with ruin. He declared, that he had never loved despotism in any land; he had not loved it the more for its being in France; but there was a despotism more dreadful than ever was wielded by the monarch of any civilised people; and that was 'the despotism of an unprincipled, ferocious, tyrannical democracy; of a democracy, which had not a single virtue of republicanism to redeem its crimes: this was so far from being worthy of imitation, as had been said by his honorable friend, that it was worthy of all abhorrence; and he would spend the last drop of his blood, would quit his best friends, and join his most avowed enemies, to oppose the least influence of such a spirit in England.'

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This declaration was received with much applause

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between

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Sheridan.

by a majority of the house; and from it may be dated the grand schism which took place among the whigs. Pitt was loud in praise of the orator; and Fox, perceiving that the question descended to a point of personal feeling, endeavored to soothe the irritation which had taken possession of his friend's mind. He declared, 'that he had ever felt the highest veneration for the judgment of his honorable friend, by whom he had been instructed more than by all other men and books together; by whom he had been taught to love our constitution; from whom he had acquired nearly all his political knowledge,—certainly all that he most valued: his speech on that day, some arguments and observations excepted, was among the wisest and most brilliant ever delivered in the house: still, however, with all these admissions, his opinion on the general subject remained unaltered.' Mr. Burke acknowledged these expressions, dictated as they were by the sincerity of friendship, in a courteous reply; but it was evident that from this moment they must come to a separation in their parliamentary course: the disruption of their friendly connexion was probably hastened by some angry observations of Sheridan, who used the strongest expressions in his power to resuscitate the sunken fires of debate; charging Burke with 'deserting the camp, to defend despotism, and assail the principles of freedom; with obtruding himself on the house as a libeller of liberty, and the enemy of men who were laboring for the noblest objects.' Mr. Burke immediately rose, to express his indignation at language, 'which ought to have been spared, were it only a sacrifice to the Manes of departed friendship; language, indeed, not new; since it was but a repetition of what was heard at the reforming clubs and societies with which the honorable gentleman had lately become entangled, and for whose plaudits he had chosen to sacrifice his friends; though he would in time discover that the value of such praise was hardly worth the price paid for it: henceforward, they were separated in politics for ever.' An attempt was

afterwards made by the leaders of the party to reconcile two persons, whose talents were so conspicuous; but as the majority inclined to give sentence against Sheridan with regard to the quarrel, that gentleman took such deep offence, that for nearly twelve months he abstained from parliamentary discussions.

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Burke had now taken up that position for which he seemed to be destined. Swayed by the strong impulse of personal feelings, with a temper impatient of control, and an imagination prone to magnify facts which impressed him with alarm or hope, with an unlimited command of language, and a copiousness of imagery misleading his hearers almost as much as it illustrated or enforced his positions, he exposed himself to many and serious accusations: but it may be doubted whether less of passion and prejudice than he possessed, would have suited the peculiar station which he occupied. In a revolutionary age, his genius was the great counteracting force: he stood alone against the impulses communicated to European society by the philosophers of France, whose influence on men's imagination, in those stirring times, was not to be met by the ordinary mode of dispassionate reasoning: their enthusiasm could be successfully resisted only by enthusiasm, similar in degree, but different in kind: he soon gave proof of great ability in the arduous task which he had undertaken, by his memorable work, intitled 'Reflections on the Revolution of France;'—the very announcement of which, at the present period, excited strong curiosity and anxious expectation in the public mind.

Mr. Pitt, for the present, preserved a cautious and politic silence as to the merits of the French revolution; contenting himself with lavishing applause on his new ally for that zealous and seasonable attachment which he had displayed to the principles of the British constitution: the spirit, however, with which government was now actuated, appeared with less reserve in their conduct toward the dissenters, who, since the encouragement they had received last session

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relative to a repeal of the corporation and test acts, had used unremitting efforts to increase their parliamentary interest: they had held provincial meetings in all parts of the kingdom; and by their public resolutions, not only gave unequivocal proofs of joy at the late proceedings of the French people; but, in contemplation of a general election, earnestly recommended the friends of equal and universal liberty to the choice of electors. On the other hand, the clergy of the establishment were not inert: jealous of encroachment on those exclusive privileges which they conceived necessary for the preservation of true religion, and alarmed at the downfall of the Gallican church, they also formed associations, passed counter-resolutions, and revived with remarkable success the cry of 'the church in danger.' The press overflowed with publications on both sides: every dissenting minister who could wield a pen, conceived that his duty to God and the interests of society called on him to promulgate his sentiments, and flattered himself with unfading laurels for the success of his exertions; while an equal number of champions among the inferior clergy promised themselves immediate promotion to the highest dignities in the church, from the zeal and ability which they put forth in the opposite cause. Posterity will hardly credit the ardor of these two contending parties; the one leaving no earthly means untried to procure the repeal of laws which had been long reduced to a dead letter; while the other supported, with equal vehemence, two obsolete statutes enacted in a state of society totally different from the present; predicting utter ruin to the state, should soldiers and excisemen be permitted to exercise their respective callings without the solemn intervention of a sacramental test. Instead of Mr. Beaufoy, the friend and partisan of Pitt, Fox was requested by the dissenters to move a repeal of the two acts in question; and on the second of March he brought forward his motion, which he supported by an extraordinary display of talent: the minister, who had opposed the former applications

with temper and moderation, now applied some merited expressions of indignation to the conduct of the dissenters; who, at the very moment when they were reprobating the test laws, discovered their intention of forming associations to impose a test on members of that house: he also vindicated the necessity of a permanent church establishment for the good of the state; showing, at the same time, that such an institution could not exist, if toleration were extended to equality of privileges. He was seconded in his opposition to this bill by the strenuous exertions of Mr. Burke, who alarmed the house by reading extracts from dissenting authors, exhibiting great acrimony and virulence against the church: he also adjured them to let the events which had taken place in France, and the sudden downfall of the church in that kingdom, awaken their zeal for the preservation of our own admirable establishment.

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These arguments had the desired effect; for on a division, the bill was thrown out by 294 votes against 105; being an increase from a majority of twenty in the last session to 189 in the present. This result proceeded not so much from hostility to the measure itself, abstractedly considered, as to the time when it was brought forward, and to the means which its advocates put in practice to ensure success: in this point of view, the proceedings of the dissenters were remarkably injudicious; their ardor to obtain their object served only to magnify it in the eyes of their opponents; many of their publications were highly censurable; and the example of revolutionary France was brought forward in a manner calculated to alienate friends from their cause.

The final emancipation of dissenters was now evidently deferred to a distant period: a season of war and tumult, near at hand, was unfavorable to the admission, or even to the discussion, of their claims; while it would probably require years of peace and tranquillity to dispel the prejudices which time had hallowed, and peculiar events contributed to nourish.

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Had these claims been now conceded, their influence and power as a body would probably have sunk, and the greater part of them have merged in the establishment; but it seems as if they were destined to act a more important part in the state: prohibitions, which they called persecution, kept the body firmly together: laxity of church discipline during the latter part of the last and the beginning of this century, scandalous exercise of ecclesiastical patronage, and neglect in providing means of accommodation or instruction for increasing numbers of the establishment in large towns, rapidly augmented the ranks of its opponents; and as these latter partook of the prosperity of the country, and entered eagerly into the scheme of general education, they constantly advanced in power and influence, until they were enabled, not only to liberate themselves from the obnoxious acts, but to forward that great change in the British constitution, which could scarcely have been carried without their co-operation.

Two days after the above-mentioned decision, Mr. Flood, a celebrated Irish orator, moved to bring in a bill for a definite reform in parliament; proposing to add 100 members to the present house of commons, proportionally to the population of each county, to be elected by resident householders. In prefacing this motion, he ventured to utter a bold truth; relying on the virtue of the house to pardon him, when he stated, that they were not the adequate representatives of the people: that they were the legal representatives, he would not deny; nay, he would go farther, and say, that they were a highly useful and honorable council; a council, which, in any other European government, would be a vast acquisition; but, to the honor of the British constitution, we were intitled to something better. 'Representation,' he said, 'was the great arcanum and wise mystery of our government, by which it excelled all the states of antiquity. Now in what did representation consist? In this; that as by the general law of political society, the majority

was to decide for the whole; the representative must be chosen by a body of constituents who were themselves a majority of the people: he admitted that property to a certain degree was a necessary requisite to the elective power; that is to say, that franchise ought not so go beyond property, but at the same time it ought to be extended farther than at present; but by the existing system these principles were grossly violated: the freeholders, who originally included the whole property of the kingdom, now constituted only a small part of it; what was worse, the majority of representatives, who decided for the whole, and acted for eight millions of people, were chosen by a number of electors not exceeding six or eight thousand: a new body of constituents was, therefore, wanting; and in their appointment, two things were to be considered; one, that they should be numerous enough, because numbers were necessary to the spirit of liberty; the other, that they should have a competent share of property, because property was conducive to the spirit of order. But he was told this was not the time for reform: and why? because there were disturbances in France: yet it was for want of a timely and temperate reform, that these evils had fallen on France. He was no friend to revolutions; because they were an evil: he was a friend to timely reform, which rendered revolutions unnecessary: those who opposed such a reform, might be enemies to revolution in their hearts, but were friends to it by their folly: let the representative be chosen, as he ought to be, by the people, and continue to walk worthy of that choice; then Britain would have nothing to dread from the example of France.'

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This motion, simple and eligible as it appeared, was vehemently opposed by Mr. Windham, one of the most zealous of Burke's disciples: his arguments were drawn principally from the danger of reforming such an institution at such a time, which would be like repairing a house during the hurricane season: in this opinion he had the concurrence of Pitt; who declared,

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‘that if the motion before them were the precise resolution which he himself had formerly proposed, he should now vote against it from a thorough conviction of its impropriety: at a more seasonable opportunity, however, he would certainly again submit his ideas on the subject to the consideration of the house.’ Fox dissented intirely from Mr. Windham’s notions; and affirmed, in opposition to his metaphorical argument, ‘that no season could be more proper for the commencement of repairs, than when a hurricane was near, and ready to burst forth:’ the general sentiment appeared so adverse to the motion, that Mr. Flood withdrew it without dividing the house. These were the only great political questions that engaged the attention of the commons this season; and with them they rested, without extending to the peers: subjects of revenue occupied the chief attention of parliament during the remainder of the session. In April, Pitt opened his financial scheme for the year; and after stating the prosperous condition of the country to prove and illustrate his positions, he recapitulated the extraordinary expenses defrayed in 1789, in addition to the regular establishment: notwithstanding these unforeseen demands, though we had borrowed only one million, we had paid off six millions of debt: the increase of revenue, which had thus liquidated so many and great charges, originated in two permanent causes; the suppression of smuggling, and the advance of commerce. The supplies for the army, navy, and ordnance were nearly the same as in last year; and no new taxes were imposed.

East India
affairs.

Mr. Dundas about the same time presented an account of the financial state of India, by which it appeared that the revenue of that country considerably exceeded the product of the preceding year, and that the increase was likely to be permanent. The system of justice and moderation adopted since the territorial possessions were subjected to the control of the British government, had produced very advantageous results both to the natives and to this country; the landed

revenues, being more willingly paid, were collected with less difficulty; fostered by a humane and equitable administration, the internal commerce of our settlements had greatly increased; and the rigid faith observed with the natives had put an end to those formidable conspiracies, which diminished territorial improvement while they created enormous expenses: prosperity, arising from a general scheme of policy so wise and liberal, must rapidly increase; so that in a few years the colony would be enabled to pay off arrears, and British India would exhibit a greater increase in commerce, manufactures, and every species of wealth, than any other part of Hindostan. In the present state of things we had no danger to fear from any European nation: Holland was our ally; and France was scarcely in a situation to disturb our foreign possessions: we had, indeed, one enemy in the East; but without European auxiliaries, and unsupported by the other native powers, Tippoo Saib never could become formidable to the British empire.

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The house voted several sums as a recompense for services, or indemnification for losses, in the cause of the public: an annuity of £1000 per annum was granted to Dr. Willis, who, under Providence, had been so instrumental in restoring a beloved sovereign to his people; and the speaker's salary was advanced from £3000 to £6000: in a committee on American claims, Mr. Pitt descanted on the peculiar losses sustained by the family of Penn, and obtained for them a perpetual grant of £4000 per annum out of the consolidated fund. Mr. Wilberforce moved for a consideration of the slave trade; but most of the time allotted to that subject was occupied in the hearing of evidence; so that no bill was introduced.

The trial of Warren Hastings made but little progress during this session; and the circumstances which delayed it were detailed by Mr. Burke. The managers had proposed in the written evidence to confine the recital of letters and papers to such extracts as related to their charges; but the counsel for Hastings

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insisted on reading the whole; and the lords had agreed that no partial quotation from any document could be received as evidence, but that either the whole contents, or no part, should be adduced: of this resolution Burke complained, as an obstacle to the prosecution; declaring at the same time that it was the duty of the house and its appointed managers, to persevere in the trial without regarding any hindrances; and having moved two resolutions to that effect, they were both carried. The ex-governor continued to possess a zealous advocate in major Scott, who employed not only his voice, but his pen in the cause: one of his productions was voted a gross libel on the house of commons, and it was agreed that the author should be censured in his place; Burke declaring that not less than £20,000 had been expended in such productions, through the agency of major Scott, the general libeller of that house.

Disputes
with Spain.

On the fifth of May, parliament was surprised by a message from his majesty, intimating an apprehension, that the peace, which had already contributed so much to the prosperity of Great Britain, might be broken; the following being the circumstances in which this message originated. Captain Cook, in his last voyage, had touched at Nootka, or Prince William's Sound, where his crew purchased some valuable furs, which they disposed of to great advantage in China; and in consequence of the recommendation of captain King, who published the last volume of 'Cook's Voyages,' some mercantile adventurers from the East Indies, with the consent of the governor-general, undertook to supply the Chinese with furs from those regions; for which purpose they fitted out two small vessels: this trade proved so advantageous, that in 1788 the adventurers resolved to form a permanent settlement; which was augmented in the following year, when land was purchased from the natives, and about seventy Chinese, with several artificers, were added to the establishment. In May, two Spanish ships of war arrived in the Sound, seized an English vessel, and

sent the crew prisoners to a Spanish port: they then took possession of the settlement, removed the British flag, and declared that all lands between Cape Horn and the sixtieth degree of north latitude on the western coast of America, were indisputably the property of his catholic majesty: another vessel was subsequently captured; the cargoes of both were sold, and the crews cast into prison.

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These incidents were notified to the British court by the Spanish ambassador himself, who at the same time expressed his master's desire that measures might be adopted to prevent British subjects from frequenting those coasts: he also complained of the fisheries carried on by the English in the adjoining seas, as contrary to the rights of the Spanish crown. Notifications and remonstrances like these were met by a demand of satisfaction for the insults offered to the British nation, and reparation to the individuals who had suffered in property and person: intelligence also having been received that armaments were fitting out in the Spanish ports, his Britannic majesty judged it right to prepare on his side for supporting the rights and interests of his kingdom with vigor and effect.

These circumstances being stated in the king's message, his majesty requested his faithful commons to enable him to make such augmentation of force as necessity seemed to require; expressing at the same time an earnest wish that the wisdom and equity of his catholic majesty might offer that satisfaction which was unquestionably due, so as to prevent all future interruption of the harmony and friendship which subsisted between the two nations.

This message being taken into consideration, Mr. Pitt declared that he was too well assured of the public spirit of the house, to conceive that any difference of opinion could arise regarding the measures to be adopted: the court of Madrid had not only seized our ships and men, where we had an incontrovertible right of trading, and where no nation pos-

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essed any exclusive claim ; but had refused all restitution and satisfaction for the injury. The destruction of our valuable fisheries in the southern ocean was aimed at, as well as the annihilation of a profitable commerce, which we were beginning to carry on with unfrequented parts of the globe : much, therefore, as we might desire peace, we ought to be prepared for war, if Spain continued to refuse satisfaction for her aggression, and to assert claims inconsistent with the rights of independent navigators : he therefore moved an address corresponding to the message.

On a subject which thus involved the interests and the honor of the nation, there was but one sentiment in both houses ; and in the commons, Mr. Fox was foremost to declare his intire concurrence with the minister ; though he blamed him for having laid before them so flattering a prospect of the continuance of peace, when the principal grounds of his majesty's message were known from the Spanish ambassador. In reply to this animadversion, it was stated, that government was not at that time aware of the extent of Spanish claims, or of the preparations carried on in Spanish ports ; accordingly, a unanimous address was presented to his majesty by parliament, assuring him of their determination to afford him the most zealous and effectual support in maintaining the dignity of his crown and the essential interests of his dominions : this was followed by a vote of credit for £1,000,000, for the purpose of carrying into effect the warlike preparations that might be necessary. Motions made in both houses for the production of papers to illustrate the grounds of this dispute, were resisted, on an established rule of policy, prohibiting all documents relating to a negotiation with any foreign power from being produced, while such negotiation is pending.

On the tenth of June his majesty closed the session with a speech, in which he acquainted the two houses that he had as yet received no satisfactory answer from the court of Madrid, and was therefore under

the necessity of proceeding in preparations for war: he also announced his intention of dissolving the present parliament; at the same time acknowledging their affectionate and unshaken loyalty to his person, their uniform and zealous regard for the true principles of our invaluable constitution, and their unremitting attention to the happiness and prosperity of the country: in a concise but comprehensive summary, his majesty enumerated the salutary effects of their counsels; and, at the conclusion, emphatically added; 'the loyalty and public spirit, the industry and enterprise of my subjects, have well seconded your exertions: on their sense of the advantages which they at present experience, and their uniform attachment to my person and government, I rely for a continuance of that harmony and confidence, which must at all times afford the surest means of meeting the exigences of war, or of cultivating with increasing benefit the blessings of peace.' Next day parliament was dissolved by proclamation.

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It being the intention of government to avoid hostilities unless absolutely necessary, Mr. Fitzherbert was despatched to Madrid with full powers to settle all disputes between the two nations. The grounds of claim were set forth officially by Spain to all the European courts, in a document dated June 4, 1790; and were more specifically detailed to the English ambassador: in these statements, she claimed a prescriptive right to the exclusive navigation, commerce, and property of South America and the Spanish West Indies, according to treaties acknowledged by England, especially that of Utrecht, which recognised the rights of the Spanish monarchy to their South American and West Indian dominions, as they existed in the reign of Charles II. On the part of England, it was answered, that we were still ready to adhere to that recognition; but the admission by no means proved that Nootka-sound made part of those dominions: whatever is common, belongs to the first occupier; and right being only co-extensive with occupancy, any nation may

Adjust-
ment of
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fairly appropriate to itself what it can acquire without trespassing on the previous appropriations of others: the Spaniards, not having established their claim to the territory in question by occupancy or labor, could prove no right to an exclusive property in it; the seizure therefore of British vessels and effects, was an injury and an insult, which demanded restitution and satisfaction. This language was at first resented as haughty and menacing by the Spanish court, which attempted to interest that of France in its behalf; and this latter was willing enough to support the Bourbon compact, but had lost the power: the French nation was at this time very adverse to a war with England; and as the fleets of Spain were unable to cope with those of Great Britain, she began to intermingle offers of concession with her previous declarations of pacific intentions; and on the twenty-fourth of July issued a declaration, testifying her willingness to comply fully with the demands of his Britannic majesty: this being accepted by Mr. Fitzherbert, a convention between the two courts was signed on the twenty-eighth of October, by which the settlement of Nootka-sound was restored; and full liberty of trade to all the north-west coasts of America, as well as of navigation in the Southern Pacific, and of fishery within ten miles of the coast, was confirmed to Great Britain; illicit commerce with the Spanish settlements being prohibited: both nations were equally restricted from attempting to form any settlement nearer to Cape Horn than the most southerly plantations already established by Spain: it was also agreed, that in case of any future complaint, no violence should be committed, but recourse had to an amicable adjustment between the respective courts. This convention, as well as the manner in which the minister obtained satisfaction for the country without involving it in war, was generally applauded; though the sum which Great Britain expended in warlike preparations amounted to £3,000,000. On the third of December, however, when the new parliament had assembled, and a copy

Meeting of
new parlia-
ment.

of the convention was laid before the two houses, its terms were not ratified with unanimous consent: Mr. Grey, in the commons, moved for the production of papers, without which it was impossible to decide whether we might not have gained all our boasted advantages at a much less expense; and whether the late disputes were owing to the ambition and unjust claims of Spain, or to the rashness, presumption, and ignorance of his majesty's ministers. Fox affirmed that the treaty was one of concession rather than of acquisition; that we had given up what was of infinite value to Spain, and retained what would be of little advantage to ourselves. In the house of lords, the convention was strongly reprobated by the marquis of Lansdowne, who took an extensive view of European politics from the year 1782; showing that from the period of the king of Prussia's death in 1786, we had changed our policy, and commenced a new system, by which we had failed in securing France, or Spain, or any other power: in this last convention, he observed, the fishery was defined to our disadvantage. As to the right of trading, that was asserted even in the time of Elizabeth, and in the treaty of 1670; and was afterwards acknowledged in 1749: but this proceeding at Nootka-sound endangered all the advantages of our commercial treaty with Spain: we were doing the work of other nations, and of North America in particular.

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Whatever truth there may have been in these observations of his lordship, relative to other nations enjoying the exclusive benefits of the late armament, England alone was called upon to defray its expense; and this Mr. Pitt proposed to meet with temporary taxes, assisted by £500,000, which he contemplated taking from the unclaimed dividends at the Bank of England, estimated at about £660,000: this proposition, however, excited so much alarm in the great chartered companies, as well as the mercantile world in general, that the minister thought proper to abandon it; consenting to accept, by way of compromise,

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Continental
politics.

a loan of £500,000 from the Bank without interest, so long as a floating balance to that amount should remain in the hands of its cashier. The amount of the national debt at this time was £542,000,000, funded, and £42,000,000 unfunded.

While Great Britain was successfully employed in securing for herself the blessings of peace, she was anxious that these should be extended also to other nations. In conjunction with Prussia, Holland, Sweden, Turkey, and Poland, she had already formed a defensive union against the ambitious projects of the two imperial courts; and the principal object of this confederacy was to save the Ottoman empire from ruin, while the associates afforded to each other reciprocal protection: nor was it a much less essential part of British policy to free Poland from its subjection to the czarina, and draw toward English ports the numerous productions of that fertile and extensive country. As negotiation was the first purpose of the powers not actually engaged in hostilities, overtures were made for a congress; which, though rejected by Russia, was, after some difficulty, accepted by Austria, whose throne was now occupied by Leopold, late grand duke of Tuscany: this prince, though he did not possess superior talents, was, by his steadiness, prudence, and pacific disposition, well qualified to remedy the evils which had proceeded from the violence, injustice, and caprice of his predecessor. At Reichenbach, where the proposed congress met, the habitual prepossessions of two great rival statesmen, Kaunitz and Hertzberg, were strongly exhibited: the former, still directing his aim to the aggrandisement of the house of Austria, was averse to peace, from the hopes which he entertained of acquiring advantages from the Russian alliance, and a prosecution of the Turkish war; the latter, following the policy of his late master Frederic the Great, without adverting to a change of circumstances, desired to attack Austria in her weak and exhausted state, to aid the revolt of the Low Countries, prevent the elevation of Leopold to the imperial

throne, and take possession of the rest of Silesia: the wiser and more liberal policy of Great Britain, however, being ably advocated by Mr. Ewart, our ambassador at the court of Berlin, so strongly inculcated the necessity of sacrificing hereditary enmity to permanent and comprehensive interests, that the principals in this negotiation assented to his arguments; and on the twenty-seventh of July a convention was concluded. The king of Hungary agreed to open a negotiation for peace, on the basis of reciprocal restitution, accepting the members of the defensive alliance as umpires: the empress was to be invited to accede to these conditions; and in case of her refusal, Leopold was to observe a strict neutrality; while Prussia engaged to co-operate with the maritime powers in restoring the Netherlands to Austria, on condition that their ancient constitution, rights, and privileges were also restored.

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The war between the czarina and the sultan was carried on languidly so long as Catharine's attention was directed to the congress in Silesia, and to some schemes of policy in other quarters: one of these was to detach the Greek subjects of the Porte from their obedience, in furtherance of her grand project of driving the Turks from Europe, and raising her grandson to the imperial throne of Constantine. By her encouragement and pecuniary assistance a rebellion was fomented in Albania, and an extensive plan arranged by the Greeks for emancipating themselves from the Ottoman yoke: a memorial, offering the sovereignty of Greece to the Russian prince, was laid before the empress, and graciously received; but ere the plan could be matured, Russia was induced, if not to relinquish, at least to postpone her attempts on Turkey. It was late in the autumn, before her army, under prince Potemkin, was put in motion; but it was the result of policy, to wait till the Asiatic troops separated from the rest of the Ottoman forces: then operations commenced in earnest; and the end of this year witnessed the capture of Ismail by Suwarrow, where 24,000 Turkish soldiers perished; 7000 of the

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inhabitants, men, women, and children, were massacred; and the slain on the side of the conquerors exceeded 10,000 men: such are the horrors of war!

The king of Sweden opened the campaign against Russia early this year, and penetrated into the country, till he arrived within 100 miles of St. Petersburg. Catharine, alarmed at the approach of her enemies, sent 10,000 troops to obstruct their progress, who attacked the Swedish lines, but were defeated with the loss of 2000 men: Gustavus still advanced; while his fleet, under the duke of Sudermania, sailed up the gulf of Finland, penetrated into the harbor of Revel, and had nearly succeeded in destroying the great naval arsenal, with all the ships and magazines, when it was dispersed by a violent storm: its commander, being afterwards attacked by two Russian squadrons in front and rear, extricated himself from the danger with great courage and skill, and joined his royal brother off Wiburg: here they were again enclosed by superior forces on land and sea; but effected their escape by forcing their way through the enemy, with great loss both of ships and men. The genius of Gustavus having enabled him to recruit his shattered forces, he took the command of his own squadron; and having encountered a large Russian fleet, he gained a decisive victory, in which the enemy lost more than 4000 men slain, and as many in prisoners: this defeat, and the prowess of her antagonist, alarmed the czarina: being abandoned by Austria, and threatened both by England and Prussia, she now entered into negotiation with the Swedish monarch; who, relying on the defensive alliance to repress the ambitious projects of the empress, concluded an armistice with her, which, before the end of August, ripened into a peace.

Freed from a Turkish war, Leopold had leisure to turn his attention to the affairs of the Low Countries. The Flemings had begun their resistance to Joseph on principles totally different from those which prevailed in France; but their vicinity to that country, and a closer intercourse between the two nations, led to an

introduction of French doctrines, which other causes contributed to disseminate: since their revolt, the States-General had exercised sovereign authority; but this body being chiefly composed of nobles and clergy, the inequality was soon remarked, and reprobated by the members of the third estate, who had either imbibed democratical notions, or were ambitious of aggrandising themselves by the elevation of the commons. Early in the present year, a number of individuals, professing such sentiments, formed themselves into an association, which they denominated a patriotic assembly: after passing various resolutions of subordinate reform, they framed a general system of revolution, and published an address to the States, in the name of the people, reprobating their permanent exercise of the sovereign authority, as an aristocratical despotism; and demanding a legitimate constitution, formed and ratified by the commons. These principles and demands were so offensive to the two higher orders, that they endeavored to silence them by promoting counter-addresses, and by subjecting the press to the same restrictions as those which had been imposed by imperial authority: such attempts to restrain the actions, and control the sentiments of the people, gave great dissatisfaction to all who wished for a larger portion of democracy in the constitution: two distinct parties were formed in the state; the one composed of the nobles and clergy, the other of the commons, with those that were inimical to the privileged orders. The dissensions which followed this state of affairs gave an opportunity of interference to Leopold, who sent a memorial to the Netherlanders, in which he expressed sincere regret for the despotic proceedings of the Austrian government, and declared his anxiety to redress all real grievances; at the same time vindicating his undoubted claim to the sovereignty, and announcing his resolution to maintain it: this address, and the situation of Belgian affairs, revived the spirits of the loyalists or adherents of the house of Austria; while many moderate men began to compare the

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present miserable condition of the country, with the tranquillity and happiness it enjoyed under Maria Theresa : if the States-General should govern, they must groan under a coalition of ambitious priests and nobles; if a republic on democratic principles should be formed, the consequence would be anarchy, with its attendant evils, terminating in the despotism of a single ruler: by degrees, great numbers of the populace embraced these opinions, and the party acquired a very imposing force. Leopold, being now raised to the imperial throne, issued a manifesto, engaging himself, under an inaugural oath, and the guarantee of Great Britain, Prussia, and the United Provinces, to govern the Belgic Netherlands wholly according to the constitution that was in force under Maria Theresa; he also offered an amnesty to all who should return to their duty before the first of November. The mediating powers notified to the Belgian states their approval of these terms; but it was found impossible to bring that body to relinquish their authority, until the Austrian troops entered the territory: various engagements, uniformly unsuccessful, soon indicated the folly of resistance: the allied powers represented to them the cruelty of continuing a hopeless warfare; the Austrian troops pressed on; and the people generally acknowledged the heir of their ancient rulers. The leading members of the opposing party, apprehending resentment from the emperor, now took to flight; but the Austrians used their success with a wise moderation: life and property were protected; and in a convention, guaranteed by the defensive alliance, and executed on the tenth of December, the constitution of Maria Theresa, augmented by some additional rights and privileges, was restored to the Belgic provinces.

Progress of
the French
revolution.

In Paris, the national assembly zealously pursued its legislative labors; but, unfortunately, as must always be the case when such a task is committed to men of inexperience and passion, contingent benefits were vastly overbalanced by prevailing faults: indeed, no remedies, applied to partial grievances, can ever

compensate for the violation of great fundamental principles in justice and legislation; for the greater evil will soon swallow up the lesser good: thus, though the French assembly remodelled the courts of judicature, and issued an order, that the estates of protestants, who fled from the country on the iniquitous repeal of the edict of Nantz, should be restored; yet the confiscation of ecclesiastical property, by this same assembly, soon led to the overthrow of all property whatever; while the very invention of the guillotine showed what a summary process of trial had succeeded to the ancient usages of the law. Again, though the most vexatious remnants of feudal tyranny were banished with the *corvée* and odious game-laws; yet, in the abolition of all titles and hereditary nobility, that powerful and conservative influence, which arises from a high-minded aristocracy, was wholly lost to the state:⁴ the kingly title soon followed those of the nobles; and when the democratic spirit was set free from all its confining bonds, the kingdom became deluged with blood.

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The reforms which had already taken place satisfied la Fayette and his party, which represented the middle classes, and formed a majority in the assembly: but the bridle had been taken from the mouth of the fiery steed; and what was to stop his course? The nation was in a state of fermentation; all ties of authority were loosened; the soldiery became mutinous and turbulent; numerous emigrations took place; the financial resources were paralysed; and Neckar, who had lost all his popularity, fled from a country which he had contributed to ruin: in the mean time, the demagogues, who, within the precincts of the assembly, had not sufficient scope for developing their sentiments or forwarding their plans, succeeded in becoming masters of a club, established at first by the more moderate friends of liberty; which, after the removal of the

⁴ So sensible of the utility of this influence was Napoleon, that he soon filled up the void with titles of his own creation, and those of the emigrants whom he recalled.

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court to Paris, had installed itself in the convent of Jacobins. From this connexion, as violence gained ground, la Fayette and others seceded, to form a separate association; after which, Barnave and the two Lameths placed themselves at the head of the Jacobins; men who detested both la Fayette and Mirabeau; being impelled in their course by the principles of envy, and the ambition of pre-eminence: they coquetted with the genuine party of the populace, rather than embraced it; and were supported solely by their talents.

Mirabeau was actuated by more independent sentiments: at the beginning of the present year, his ardor for revolution began to cool; and he could not but disapprove of a constitution which he himself had helped to form: he thought it far too democratic for a monarchy; and, knowing the value of that species of government, he declared, that 'he would rather live in Constantinople than in France, if laws could be made without the sanction of the king.' Hence it was that he leagued secretly with the fallen court; laboring to raise it by his popularity, and to recover for the crown a portion of strength necessary for its existence: la Fayette, on the contrary, held firm to the constitution now established; to observe which, the king swore, on the altar of the country, at the celebrated fête held on the fourteenth of July, the anniversary of the destruction of the Bastile; where more than 500,000 Frenchmen met and took on themselves a similar obligation.

Progress of
revolution-
ary prin-
ciples in
England.

Some notion of the extent to which admiration of French proceedings was carried in England, may be formed from the circumstance, that on the day of this Parisian solemnity, upwards of 600 gentlemen assembled to celebrate the event which it commemorated: their chairman was earl Stanhope, who acted as president of the Revolution Society, established in London; and which, after extending its ramifications through this kingdom, was in active correspondence, not only with the national assembly, but with innu-

merable societies in all parts of France, instituted for the promotion of revolutionary principles.⁵ The associates, among whom were members of all the professions, many second-rate literary men, and numerous dissenters, could lay claim generally to no practical acquaintance with politics, or the working of governments: however deep they might be in the knowledge of books, or ingenious in speculative theories, they knew nothing of human nature in great and untried exigences: even those who had good intentions, would have committed gross errors if they had found an opportunity of reducing them to practice; while there were many, whose views on the constitution of their country were more than questionable.

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Against this, and similar associations, Mr. Burke bitterly inveighed in his grand work,⁶ which made its appearance toward the end of this year, and was instantly assailed with innumerable pamphlets dictated by unprecedented virulence; every epithet of abuse in the language being applied to it, and every action or expression of the author, which could be tortured into a sinister meaning, being raked up to convict him of inconsistency. Among the most noted of these productions, was 'The Rights of Man,' by Thomas Paine, written in a style calculated to impose on ordinary understandings; though its purpose was, by setting the baser at war with the better passions of our nature, to pull down superior rank, talents, and distinction, to a level with the lower orders. Mr. Burke, however, was consoled, not only by testimonies of approbation which he received from the highest characters in the realm, but by the applause of almost all the sovereigns of Europe, over which it quickly spread by means of a French translation: but his chief satisfaction arose from disclosing to his countrymen an evil which had been making a rapid, though

⁵ See a publication intitled 'Correspondence of the Revolution Society in London with the National Assembly, and with various Societies of the Friends of Liberty in France and England.'—London, 1792.

⁶ 'Reflections on the Revolution,' &c.

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silent progress, in their ranks; for neither the government, nor the people at large, had any notion that French principles were so widely diffused, or had procured so many converts.

Among the most ardent admirers of Mr. Burke's lofty appeal to loyalty, was George III.; who distributed many copies of it among his friends, declaring that it was a book which 'every gentleman ought to read:' nor can we be surprised at the approbation thus manifested by his majesty towards a work, which sounded the knell of the old whig confederacy. Some of the party yielded at once to the eloquence of this extraordinary publication; others drew off, as they saw the development of those principles, against which Mr. Burke had directed the powerful artillery of his genius; so that the appellations of whig and tory, which had already deviated considerably from their original import, came to be popularly applied in a sense still more different: by the former were now understood the favorers of those democratic principles which prevailed in France; men who professed to act as friends of the people, and were equally hostile to the influence of the aristocracy and that of the crown: by the latter, those who were alarmed at the progress of the French revolution; and who were ready to resist it by all possible means, including even actual war.

Death of
Howard.

Whilst a false philanthropy was endeavoring to disturb mankind in Europe by unsettling the principles of moral conduct, intelligence arrived from Asia of the death of the most active and indefatigable among the friends of the human race. The celebrated Howard, who, to use the words of Mr. Burke, 'had visited all Europe; not to survey its sumptuous palaces or stately temples; not to take measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur, or to form a scale of the curiosities of modern art; not to collect medals, or to collate manuscripts; but to dive into the depths of dungeons, and plunge into the infection of hospitals; to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain; to take

the guage and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt; to remember the forgotten, attend to the neglected, and visit the forsaken; to compare and collate the distresses of all men in all climes;—this incomparable traveller finished his grand ‘voyage of discovery,’ his ‘circumnavigation of charity,’ at Cherson in the Crimea; where he was buried in the garden of a French gentleman, who administered to him the last offices of disinterested friendship.

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APPENDIX.

Letter alluded to at page 56.

Dear Madam,

You ask me my reasons for speaking and voting in the house of commons, as I did, on the subject of the address, and (as Mr. A * * * said) for protracting the American war. Alas! the protracting or the finishing it, is no longer in the option of England. Opportunities have been lost; and a series of incoherent unsteady plans have driven the Americans to that situation, when, despair urging them to unite with the determined enemies of this country, they could be considered in no other light than as enemies themselves. A war, unnatural and unjust in the beginning, may in the subsequent circumstances change its complexion: America oppressed by England, treated with cruelty and injustice, was an object of extreme and humane attention; but America, in league with France and Spain to dismember the British empire, throwing off its allegiance, declaring its independence, and uniting unnaturally for our destruction, justifies England in those acts of hostility, which I hope she will always have spirit and vigor to exert against enemies of every description. It is ridiculous to ascribe the American war to our present ministers: it took its rise from a remote period; from the late inglorious peace; and has been rooted by the discordant inconsistent plans of every administration since that period. But retrospect is of no avail: the duty of an honest citizen is to consider the actual state of his country, and what is most likely to extricate us from the dangers that surround us. Nothing can effect this but vigorous exertions: no other alternative remains: France, Spain, and America, have formed an unnatural alliance for our destruction; and they are all to be opposed with equal courage. Such ideas the present moment suggested to me: the total want of exertion among these allies, their fruitless unavailing attempts against this country, the glorious struggle we make in our own defence, and our late victory under lord Cornwallis, combine to rouse us from a state of despondency.

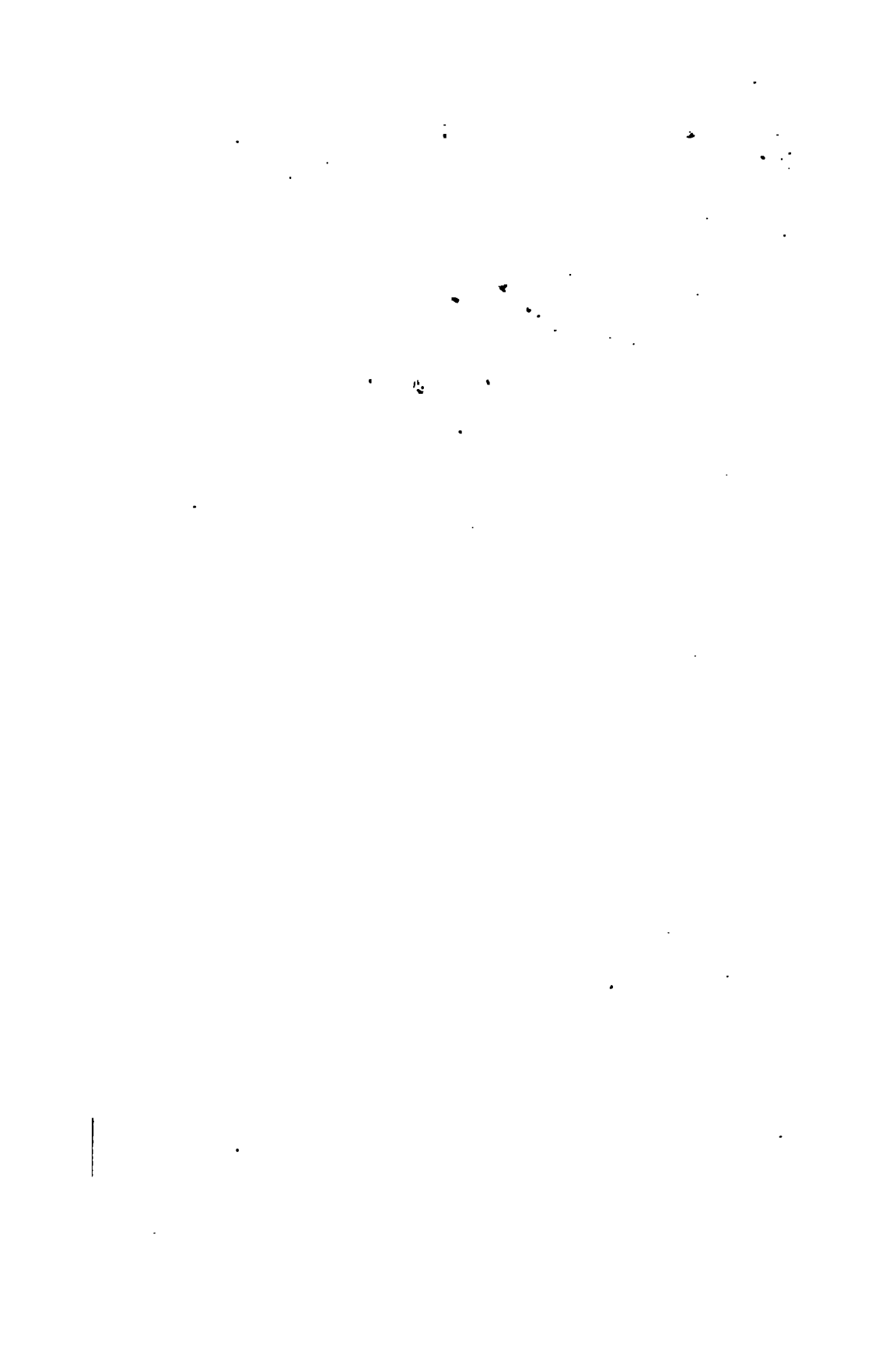
While that victory may give us sanguine hopes of the success of our military operations, it puts us under the necessity of continuing the war: many will therefore think it an unfortunate victory; but my ideas are different: in one point I think most opinions will acquiesce—that while under the sanction of that victory many have returned to their allegiance, and while many claim the protection which such an event gives us the power of offering, to withdraw our troops, and leave our friends exposed to the most cruel and irritated tyranny, would be as inhuman, as I contend it would be impolitic: we should sacrifice every claim to honor, justice, and public faith by such an act: we should sacrifice the character we have among nations for honor as well as bravery. We must then go on, reduced to the necessity of seeking peace through the medium of war: and a war carried on with vigor will be the surest road to what we all pray for. Our situation is not desperate; the alliance against us is unnatural, and consequently not likely to be vigorous in its efforts or decisive in its consequences. What I said of alliances in general history justifies. Remember, I am not justifying the American war in its origin, or approving the method in which it has been conducted: no one is more sensible than I am, of the mistaken policy which first drove the Americans to throw off their allegiance; or of the folly of sacrificing so many men for the conquest of them. I argue from the momentary situation of our affairs; from the spirit which I feel as an Englishman not to submit to our enemies; and from the hopes I entertain that our exertions will break the neck of an alliance formed without cordiality between nations dissimilar in laws, principles, and religion. I have thus given you my ideas on this interesting subject, which dictated to me the active part I took on the consideration of the address, and which induced me to speak in the manner which Mr. A * * * wonders at. I have been so copious on this topic that I must say, with the clergymen of most parishes,—what I have further to observe shall be referred to another opportunity.

I am, dear Madam,
Your most dutiful son,
HOR. MANN.

Cotesmore,
Nov. 11th, 1780.

END OF VOL. III.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY RAYNER AND HODGES,
109, Fetter Lane, Fleet Street.







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